

RAC/RecRAC Meeting Minutes

Utah State Office, BLM
Salt Lake City, UT
Conference Call/In-person Meeting

NWX-DOI BUREAU OF LAND M

**Moderator: Sherry Foot
January 10, 2014
8:00 a.m. MT**

RAC members in attendance: Frank White, Carl Albrecht, Bryan Harris, Lowell Braxton, Brian Merrill, Steve Burr, Steve Slater, Porter Teegarden, JR Nelson, Ted Zimmerman, Bill Hopkin

BLM employees in attendance: Juan Palma, Sherry Foot, Cory Roegner, Aaron Curtis, Myron Jeffs, Jennifer Evans, Rock Smith, Lora Gale, Katie Stevens, Ray Kelsey, Melinda Moffitt

Forest Service: Joanna Wilson, Bill Broadbear

Members of the public: Kitty Benzar

Sherry Foot: This will be the last meeting for a few of our folks: Lowell Braxton, Bryan Harris, Jim Allison and Ted Zimmerman.

Some of these folks have reapplied to the Council and all nominations have been sent to the Washington Office. Hopefully we'll have the full Council ready for our next meeting which will be on the 23rd. If those positions aren't filled at that time, we still will have a quorum because we need three members in each of those categories in order to fulfill the quorum.

Let me just go over those members that are here at the state office. We have Frank White, Carl Albrecht, Bryan Harris, Lowell Braxton, Brian Merrill, Steve Burr, Steve Slater, Porter Teegarden, JR Nelson and Ted Zimmerman. I understand that LuAnn Adams now has a new position; she may be resigning from the Council. I had shared with her to please make sure that she submits a Letter of Resignation, if that be the case.

JR Nelson: I thought she was the Commissioner of Agriculture...

Sherry Foot: The Commissioner of the Ag - Department of Agriculture.

Sherry Foot: She has taken on that new responsibility and she feels that being on the Council and doing the commission work might not work out well for her.

This may be her last meeting, as well, but I'll keep in touch with all of you and let you know about that part of it. Who is on the call please? We have the Staircase?

Lora Gale: Good morning this is Lora Gale from the Grand Staircase.

Sherry Foot: Thanks Lora and again for Moab.

Rock Smith: Yes, this is Rock Smith and Katie Stevens will join us when we get to our piece of the agenda.

Sherry Foot: Okay thank you.

Sherry Foot: Are there any other individuals on the call? Okay, our guests from the back of the room, please, Cory.

Cory Roegner: Good morning my name's Cory Roegner I'm the Recreation Program Coordinator.

Sherry Foot: Thank you Cory.

Kitty Benzar: Good morning I'm Kitty Benzar. I'm the President of Western Slope No-Fee Coalition.

Sherry Foot: Good morning Kitty and welcome. I'd like to go over the agenda very quickly because we do have one little change to it.

Everything is okay until we get to the fee presentations from the Forest Service and they wanted me to mention this on the call for the purpose of the minutes. The American Fork Canyon Alpine Loop Recreation Area and the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway fee proposals will not be given at this time because they are still refining them. We will not be hearing from those folks with those two presentations at this time, so let that be noted in the minutes as well. Some ground rules please if I might.

This call is being recorded for the purposes of minute taking, so please speak loudly and clearly so that all can be heard and understood, especially for the purposes of transcribing. Be respectful and polite, and place all of your phones on mute. Find a place in a quiet area so that you won't be interrupted by other conversations.

If you wish to make a comment or wish to speak, would you please announce your name? For the purposes of the transcribing for the minutes it's best you have your name listed next to the individual that is speaking. I will see the word man or woman and I don't know who you are - and the folks that are transcribing do not know who you are either, so please identify yourself with your name.

Public comment period, we have it scheduled from 11:45 to 12:15. At this time our chairperson Lowell Braxton will be leading us in the public comments and we'll be turning the time over to him, as well, once I go over the agenda. Are there any questions or comments before we actually get started?

Inside your packet you have your travel voucher information. Those that are on travel status, if you did lodge please make sure that you provide me with your hotel receipts and your mileage information. The local people, unfortunately we are not able to reimburse for mileage, (within the local community area). Those outside the Salt Lake, Davis County, Utah County area, yes, we will provide you with your mileage. So please indicate that on your travel sheets as well. I will turn the time over to Lowell.

Lowell Braxton: Well I guess this brings us to the 8:15 portion of the agenda and I'm turning over to you Juan, as I understand it.

Juan: Oh thank you Lowell and Happy New Year to everyone, I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and good Christmas and you got all the gifts that you wished for. I hope everything will be very nice for all of you in 2014 and I know I'm looking forward to 2014.

As I thought about over the holidays reflecting on 2013 and just (thinking upon) reflection, you know, I was thinking about what would be something that I could think about as a theme for 2014, not only for myself personally but for the BLM, as well. And I've chosen the words - two words "be better" is what I've chosen on the theme for 2014. If you look up the word "better" you can use that word as a noun; you can use it as an adverb. You can use it in so many ways but you can also use it as a verb - better as a verb.

"Better" means that from wherever we are, we improve upon wherever we are is what is better in that way. So I was thinking about that for myself, you know, how can I become better, you know, better - a better dad, a better grandfather, a better citizen - better at what I do at the job I do. How can I improve upon those things that I've done. I've spoken to many of our employees already and that is going to be our theme for 2014 for Utah BLM, how can we be better? There's always room for improvement.

Sometimes our intentions could get in the way for power; we sometimes don't fulfill our intentions in what we want to do. So I want to tell you, you know, that's our theme to "be better" in 2014 as a Utah BLM and we can improve upon some of the good things that we've done in 2013. One of those things that we want to do in 2014 is lay out a direction as an organization of where we want to go. And so with that in mind we put together a draft document. It's a three-year strategic plan for Utah BLM and I'd like to share that with you.

I wanted to go over this document for just a moment with you and then - yes the specific request that I would ask of you. So if I might lay out some of the framework of this document as we think about all the things that we do in Utah BLM, there's so many things that we do in the context of multiple use-- so many demands on so many interests and publics.

I wanted to refer to you on Page 5, on the bottom of every page are page numbers, but Page 5, I wanted to begin my conversation with you. It lays out our BLM mission. But I wanted to go over them with you on our BLM guiding principles and Utah BLM values and what we value the work that we do. I know you can read it but I wanted to - this is so important to me that I wanted to - spend a little time with you on these guiding principles and values.

And if you will indulge me I'd like to read some of those - so on the guiding principles, "We believe that the best way to manage America's public lands is through participative management and collaboration; by recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of our workforce and by valuing individuality, diversity and creativity in order to best fulfill our stewardship responsibilities to the American people. We are devoted to the BLM mission. We give respect and offer the same in return. We promote a supportive, diverse, and understanding environment. We strive for excellence in all that we do.

Our values are "integrity, honesty, fairness, accountability, respect, self-service and personal courage."

Now those are the things that we value in our employees as we do all of our work in the Utah BLM. Those are the kinds of things that we encourage our employees to do. What follows after that, Page 6, is what I'm calling management goals.

This is sort of the larger goals that we have for Utah BLM. I won't go into details for each one of those other than to highlight that one of those things is that we want to "think big." Beyond just our own individual world that we see, how does this all relate to a longer haul? And so we want to be able to do that and really think about new urban perspectives, you know, believe it or not even in BLM, our work is much urban.

When you think of the salt lake valley and beyond that there's a lot of urban interface that we have for the BLM. Although our lands are said to be more outside of the urban area and forest service is clearly here on the edges of the city and BLM as well, we need to think about that. The second management goal is "do it right the first time." If we have time to do it the second time or the third time, we might as well just take the time to do it right the first time as one of our management goals.

Third is to "be a good neighbor" with the communities that we serve and the people that we work with. And fourth is "work for Utah." At the end of the day, you know, we have to be a value-add to the citizens of Utah and so we need to do that as we do all of our various activities for Utah BLM. The fifth is consideration for achieving our goals, you'll see some of those as we do our mission. I want to refer you to Page 8.

For example, toward the bottom of that page is that safety is really a critical component. The second to the very last bullet theme is that BLM uses, need to protect them and employees from natural dangers and ensure a safe and healthy place for employees to work. Those are some of the goals that we have. What follows then is sort of the meat of this document and we call those mission areas.

We start with the first one which is called empowering communities and then we talk about all of those things that we are going to focus ourselves in 2014 and beyond in order to empower our communities, including our recreation and the tourism that we need to really be supportive of. You'll see all those actions - there's several land actions on Page 11, that we need to look at, you know, there's all kinds of land actions that we need to do.

Because working with our clients, at the bottom of Page 11, is really important to all of us that we work with our clients and their sovereign lands and we connect to those sovereign lands here in Utah. As you move on to Page 13, our second mission area is stewardship over natural and cultural heritage resources. Some of the things that we'll need to do to be good stewards, also natural and cultural resources that we manage on behalf of all of us here Utah.

You'll see some of the things that we'll do and you'll have a chance to take a look at that a little bit more closely later. And then as we move on to Page 17, you see our mission area in number three, this is responsible and balanced use of our resources, including conventional energy, which is a really big part of our financial portfolio, not only for the BLM in Utah but the State of Utah as well, conventional energy of all kinds.

You can see where our focus is going to be over the next year and over the next little while and some of these are very important topics. Just to give you an example of the very last statement in "Address Indian Diligence and Drainage" has drainage issues with the Northern Ute Tribe. Those are really critical and important ones and we address those for our due diligence for the tribe.

Page 18 to the middle of the page we talked about renewable energy, we've got several proposals in Utah for wind geothermal along the West Desert. There are big projects in the 160 megawatts and more projects. So we need to address those and on Pages 18 and 19 talks about those kinds of things that we need to look at. And then of course our other programs that we need to look at like range on Page 20 and 21 you'll see where some of those we'll have to address those.

Page 22 our mission area and is organizational excellence. We really do need to have an organization that is focused in addressing the needs of the programs that we have and the people that we work for here in Utah. We intend to not only enhance our processes and refine and hone our procedures and work on those as well. We already have started to work on those, for example can we speed up the process to approve our APDs for drilling; we've begun that process already.

Page 26 our last mission area, number five, it's one of those things that is common to all strategies and we believe that partnerships is one of those that is common to all that we do. To be partners with a host of entities, we simply cannot do it all by ourselves and an organization at Utah BLM. So we're looking for ways and methods and ways that we can partner with NGOs, local communities - all other folks that we can partner up with to get our work done.

Also the other area that is common to our strategy is science. We need to do work on the science component. The communication and community engagement is a really important component common to our strategy. The last one we feel is really important is youth. I personally feel and you've heard me talk about this many a times, that I believe that our youth is our hope, for not only or community but our state, our country and certainly the BLM.

To bring a whole new crop of new generation of individuals that will manage the resources that we have, so youth is really a critical focus that we have. That gives you a little bit of a 30,000 - 50,000 level of strategic plan for 2014-2017. The reason that I wanted to share this document with you is because I seek your comments and your input and your thoughts. So if you would like to take a more reflective time, take a look at this document. It is in draft and so

we have a short timeframe but the 23rd of this month is sort of a deadline for comments.

Rather than having an entire group comment back on the document, what I would propose is that we just have individual comments. You can take this document and doodle on it, scribble on it and I'd be happy to take it back from you or you can scribble on a different piece of paper and give it back to me. But I would love to hear your comments on what you think of this document and the direction that we're headed.

And then just provide those back to me via email or just email - or just mail it to me or however you can get it to me by the 23rd of this month, I would love to hear what your thoughts are on this documents. And I've asked our top managers in the BLM the same thing - to take a look at this document and see if they have any comments, any thoughts, any ideas - how can we make this document better. So that's what I ask of you to take a moment - a reflective moment and look at this.

Here's what I'm going to do once we get all the comments, by the end of this month - end of January I'd like to finalize these comments in this document. And of course once we finalize it, give you all a copy. The very next thing that I'd like to do after that is have a summit with all of our top managers in Utah BLM and then make sure that we're aligning our organization that is the kind of skills that we need, the kinds of processes that we need, the kind of financials that we need to align with this direction that we have here.

It's not going to happen overnight. I think at least over time if tourism is one of those priorities, which it is, that we are having the right field in the organization to address that - is the money in the right places to move it there? And so those are the kinds of things that we're going to have to start thinking about, how do we actually begin to align the organization to our strategic plan.

That's a little bit different for the BLM that we did to just sort of get the money from Washington and sort of just do what Washington wants us to do. We want us to reverse that a little bit, kind of turn the pyramid on its head a little bit. We need to tell Washington what do we need here in Utah to be most helpful to the citizens and this is sort of our first step to do that. I'm going to stop here for now and see if there are any comments from the group on sort of what I laid out - any comments, questions or thoughts that you may have.

Bill: I've printed this and read through it. I do have some comments but I can't remember, was this in the Word document?

Sherry Foot: No.

Man: I think it was PDF wasn't it?

Sherry Foot: Yes

Bill: I wonder if we could get that in a Word so that we can place our comments in it?

Juan: It may not be as pretty looking as if in Word because we're in a different software but at least you'll get the body of the document.

Bill: Another question I had was um when I saw the ten billion can you give us an idea of where that comes from...

Juan: Sure.

Man: And is that not including the salaries of BLM employees?

Juan: No, that's coming from the actual direct. You have the multiplier of money that seven - that uses the number seven to multiply our money. But we don't even go that far, we just go to the second multiplier of money.

For example, oil and gas revenue is quite high here. Just recalling from memory clearly the highest one is oil and gas revenues in the Utah - that's where our highest revenue is. And then we also have range, you know, we have a number of millions of dollars that we get from the range program from permittees.

We have a number of revenue in areas like delivering like forestry type activities and mineral type activities, all kinds of mineral activities we have. We have lots of rights-of-way that people pay a certain amount of money for rights-of-way and then tenure that's tied to what we do. I do have a chart that divides it into all those components and it gives you the total. The other one that you see is the employment that is direct - direct employment for all those activities is not quite, but approaches 60,000 of direct

When you employ somebody in that oil rig, they're going to require a teacher and they're going to require a pharmacist and they're going to require, you know, a doctor. We don't go that far, we just go up to that employment, but it's certainly a multiplier effect that happens, you know, when you have those kinds of programs and projects in the landscape that the community is going to need another house, another realtor and all those things, we don't quite go that far.

But more on the very close direct is about as close to 60,000 employments in the state of Utah. Obviously if you multiply to the seventh level, it's going to

be way, way more people that are affected by the things that we do. So, you know, it's hard to do it but, call in and get some approval on a transmission line on some employment that happens on construction that is employment, you know, that deliver power to the community, we don't go that far to account for all of that - I hope that answered your question.

Bill: Yes.

Juan: Other comments or questions in the document? I'll give you a chart of what those questions were - where does all the money come from.

Then what I'd like to do also is send out the Word document probably either later today or tomorrow so those of you who want to do it in Word, you can. And those of you that just want to scribble on it that's okay too.

Bill: Well I'm curious of the process you did to put this together.

Juan: Yes I'd be happy to. We had a summit up in Snowbird awhile back with all of our managers of the BLM and with a retired professor from BYU that does a little bit on this sort of work, and sort of draws from us, where we think we're going.

He facilitated that summit. It was a beginning, a Genesis for him to capture some of our thoughts. We took that initial varied rough draft idea, like what is our mission area, you know, what is - those kinds of ideas. We took it to the second level of all our BLM managers, our field managers, and began to ask them, what do you think about this, so that was another process.

Once we had those on paper, we shared those with all of them - our internal managers and then they began to doodle and scribble and that's kind of the product that you see in front of you. That's kind of what we've done over the last few months and weeks on this and then where we are today is where I like to have - now that we have a little something, we don't have a blank piece of paper, we have something then I like to have more externally.

But like you all (and the rest) I think serves as that purpose is sort of a second eyes on what we're thinking about - that was the process that we went through.

Bill: One other comment is I guess could members that make comments, do you think it would be appropriate if they shared those with the rest of the RAC?

Juan: Sure, the only reason that I didn't want to have one cohesive document like we've done others is simply the timing.

I thought that probably the best approach for this document is just individually they can sit down in a quiet moment and go through it and individually just make the comments back just to save time.

Man: Juan, I don't see anything in this document, maybe I didn't look at it closely enough, about following statutes and CFRs. It makes it read to me like it's an open field running all the time.

And yet I think BLM is constrained by statutes and by the Code of Federal Regulations and I really think you need to reference that in here. Because you can talk a lot about collaboration and things like that but you still have to work within the law that's handed you.

Juan: Yes, that's a very good comment and those are the kinds of comments we'd like to get. That's a very good point and one that we probably ought to have one on the front of the document - this is not to precede any of those laws that we have.

Man: Along those same lines is the same tenure of things, how does this interface with resource management plans. I'm assuming that the resource management plans have value and consideration in the document.

Juan: Yes they do and I think one of the things that is always sometimes a bit challenging for us is that it's like our eyes are bigger than our stomachs--that we have so many things to do.

And if you were to take a resource management plan and say what are all the things we need to do, you would fill a big bucket of things to do. What this document sort of intended to do is hold and refine one of the most critical things that we need to do with that. And not that we need to do a thousand things but if we were to do ten things this year, what would be those ten things that we really need to do that would bring high return on that investment in time and money.

I'm hoping to get some of that in this document and focus on those things that would add the greatest value. That's kind of the goal of this document. Because sometimes when you look at a thousand things to do, I think we as humans - this is just my own opinion you don't get started because it's too much to do - it's just too much.

Man: I also liked your analogy because it's kind of the 30,000 foot way up there that perhaps resource management plan is substantially closer to the ground.

Juan: Yes.

Man: Juan, I think it is about doing it right the first time I've always been a proponent of that when you have time to do it again.

But it doesn't matter what you do with regulations, CFRs, statutes. You make the decision somebody's going to be unhappy, that's why you have all these lawsuits. Either the developer's going to be unhappy, the environmental group's going to be unhappy. I know you want to do it right the first time to avoid those things, but how do you avoid the litigation - just a thought that I had.

Juan: Yes.

Man: I know you got multiple lawsuits at all times.

Juan: We do and that's certainly a bit of a problem because we have around 70 right now in all kinds of things, in stages that we have them in.

Man: You need to understand them anymore.

Juan: It definitely is a dilemma. I don't know if there's a there's a magical thing that we can do because I think it's our democracy.

Man: Yes.

Juan: Our democracy such that we as Americans value the redress even in the worst of criminals there is redress. I think it is so fundamental to us as Americans that redress in that we just sort of overvalue that. I don't know but we can try. It certainly doesn't mean that we should not; we work with a whole bunch of industries to see if we can avoid that. At the end of the day, we have to move forward and allow redress for the citizens. Sometimes litigation is one of their redresses; we just have to allow them that opportunity. I think that we need to avoid it as much as we can, but it shouldn't paralyze us or make things difficult as we move forward.

Man: Well I'm not saying about the document, I hope that I hear from you as individual in the near future and again if you have any question let me know but otherwise I'll share those two things with you - thank you.

Lowell Braxton: Thank you. Sherry, we're about 45 minutes ahead of schedule, can we proceed right now without offending potential colleagues or anything like that? Well this will bring us to the fee presentation portion of our agenda then.

Man: Sherry, I also want to mention that it's supposed to be kind of stormy late this afternoon snow and stuff, so if we get done a little early that's probably okay.

For folks that need to travel it might not be a bad idea either. We'll have to comply with the public comment

Cory Roegner: Good morning everyone, again my name is Cory Roegner and I would like to introduce Lora Gale; she's our Outdoor Recreation Planner with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and today she's going to be presenting to you a fee proposal for Calf Creek Recreation Area and Deer Creek Campground.

Lora: Good morning can you hear me clearly?

Man: We can.

Lora: Great! Thanks for the opportunity to present our proposal to increase fees at Grant Staircase at two of our key recreation sites, Calf Creek and Deer Creek Campground.

(Editorial: powerpoint slide presentation available upon request)

Lora: Please go to the second page or the second slide it would have been with the map of Grand Staircase that's where I'll start.

I just wanted to start by giving a little background for some who may not be as familiar with Grand Staircase. We were the first national monument within BLM as part of the new National Landscape Conservation System, or commonly known as the Science Monument. We have nearly 1.9 million acres open to disperse recreation, yet we have very few developed facilities. We have four visitor centers, about 22 primitive trailheads, 908 miles of open roads, but yet just three small capacity campgrounds.

We average - our visitation is about 761,529 each year and we sit at the center of the Grand Circle which is an area that's marketed as the greatest concentration of parks and monuments in America. So we think we have a very special place here in Utah - next. Both sites lie within the heart of the Escalante Canyons, just spectacular towering sandstone walls, intricate slot canyons and arches. Calf Creek Recreational Area alone is the most heavily visited recreation site on the monument. Deer Creek Campground lies in close proximity, just along the Burr trail.

Both of these sites were established in 1976 and lie within special recreation management areas and are adjacent to really popular monument destinations along Scenic Highway 12 - next. Calf Creek Recreation Area is really a showcase site for the monument, it's virtually an oasis in the desert, we average 40,000 visitors to Calf Creek Recreation Area annually. People camp,

they utilize the picnic area, they swim, fish and hike. We have 13 campsites, one reservation group picnic site and two individual picnic areas.

Few sites offer the setting Calf Creek in the Northern Escalante Canyons where you have water and shade easily accessible off a key highway. You're adjacent to a world class hiking opportunity - next. Deer Creek Campground is a smaller campground, it has just seven campsites. There are more than 50,000 visitors who travel along the Burr trail, some percentage of those people also stop at Deer Creek Campground, it's located just out of the tiny community of Boulder.

The middle image on the bottom shows geographically the spectacular landscape of that sitting. So initial fees for both of these sites were initiated in the late 1970's and in February of 2000 a *Federal Register* notice reaffirmed recreational use permits at both of these areas - next. This is a description of our annual operating cost, if you look at the bottom line there for the 1232 fee dollars, our annual costs are averaging \$37,000 to \$40,000 for just labor and operation.

If you go next you'll see that fees are collected for standard amenities which includes all of those as required by the REA and as you can see by the list all are provided - next. Our fee collection authority for expanding amenities and we collect fees for the campground amenities, including those with as you can see at both campgrounds. So five are required but at Calf Creek we have nine of the required amenities and at Deer Creek we have seven of the required amenities - next.

This is our fee increase proposal, the proposed fee was developed through work on our draft business plan for both of these sites. If you look at the fees suggested for Calf Creek Campground, we would like to raise fees from \$7 to \$15. At Calf Creek our day use fees-- we would like to change our per vehicle fee from \$2 to \$5 and for our reserved picnic area we want to go from \$35 to \$50. At Deer Creek Campground where we have those seven small sites we'd like to go from \$4 to \$10.

We have proposed an advance reservation cost recovery fee, if onsite administration proves feasible and that would be just for 25% of our total sites and that would be a cost recovery fee, but the actual cost of that service would be passed along to those users if it was implemented - next.

These are one-time costs over the past several years. Historically, over the past three years, fee dollars have been used to supplement larger capital investment projects. And at the bottom you can see that for labor, miscellaneous our average is about \$50,000 to \$60,000 - next.

Our actual fee revenues have certainly not kept pace with the cost of running these sites. Our five-year average revenue is about - it hovers around \$30,000. In 2008, the America the Beautiful Pass became very popular and naturally has been a factor that has lowered our fee revenues. Holders of the pass receive free days at Calf Creek, so that will continue to be a factor for fee revenue - next. This shows our projected fee revenues with proposed fee increases.

In 2014, we're only going to have a half a year of increases because this fee will not go into effect until March and then 2015 shows the full year of the new revenues that are anticipated - next. The fee increase was based on a fair market value analysis. The new fee structure is equal or slightly less than other comparable sites in proximity. Because we have a smaller capacity campground with just 19 sites total, we're facing higher costs per services on a site-by-site comparison.

For example, if you look at Moab which has some larger campgrounds that help to spread out the cost, we don't really have that. So because of our small capacity we're always going to have um a finite level of use there. We did look at cost recovery structure and that would result in a much greater fee jump, it would have been easily at least 25 for Calf Creek, 15 perhaps for Deer Creek, but we chose to keep the fees as low as we could at this time.

That was based on guidance using the fair market value. It was based on guidance in REA related to BLM's decision-making on charging fees, which that last bullet explains - next. This is a table that shows how the fees are equal to our last and nearby campground. I think one BLM site is the only exception to that and I know they are intending to do a business plan for that campsite as well - next. These are the priorities for the expenditures going forward. We're really proposing nothing new from past years except some interpretive signs.

The funding is intended to deal with some increased labor costs and water sampling we want to do at some of our swim holes. We are really just beginning to be accountable for the costs that we already have - next. In looking at the expenditures of the fee revenues, if you look at the bottom three rows, you'll see in calculating the new revenues against our routine cost, increasing fees would slowly allow us to start to gain some equal footing with the cost of running the campgrounds.

But we're still pretty much neck and neck with costs compared to our revenue stream, the gains are really not much compared to the cost - next. Looking at the priorities again for fee revenue increases, we feel our priorities are very modest. We're just looking at paying for existing labor and operations. We are dedicated to maintaining a showcase site for Grand Staircase as well as for

NLCS and we just feel that we just - it's a critical need for us to increase fees to pay for existing labor and operating cost and also provide for a level of visitor health and safety.

This is really a key visitor orientation site, so many visitors to the monument come here. We really want to have good orientation information there related to visitor safety for heat, flash flooding. Our swim holes continually wash out in a riparian area. We want to be able to provide a great site there for people to visit – next. To supplement the fee dollars, these are the projects that would be using appropriated money.

Again we feel they are pretty basic, modest related to health and safety issues that we have in replacing aging infrastructure. We have some physical accessibility issues and we, actually in the lower part, we're talking about trying to deal with some of the human waste issues we have on the lower Calf Creek Falls Trail. Again these are all based on appropriated money, we don't expect fees to pay for these large capital costs.

In addition to these costs, we have ten BLM staff who are paid from appropriation who spend a percent of their time at Calf Creek, whether it's for fee collection, law enforcement patrols, our camp host supervision and of course all needs that goes along with it. We do have all these other costs that are paid for out of appropriated dollars - next. In terms of the socioeconomic impact, the fee increase is not anticipated to cause financial hardship.

We still think it's a pretty low fee comparable to other fees charged in the area and less than most. We have an abundance of free dispersed camping everywhere around these two campgrounds, so it isn't like there aren't other choices for people to camp. Those that might be impacted are seniors that are on a limited budget, so fixed income seniors are eligible for a 50% camping discount with a senior pass. Camping and Calf Creek would be \$7.50 for a senior and \$5.00 at Deer Creek, so that's still a pretty low cost for a great experience.

The fees will bring up the level of fees to avoid undercutting some of the private campgrounds. It's still going to be less. There is a perception out there that our low fees sort of compete with the private campgrounds. We will continue to be less but it will bring it up to be a more reasonable cost for what we need to provide services. If you look at the last socioeconomic snapshot that we did on visitors in 2008, it revealed a pretty wide discretion (**vending**) level per group that visits the monument from 356 for Utah residents up to 614 for international tourists.

America the Beautiful pass holders again are entitled to free day use. The use of the pass is very popular and it's a great deal for those who are visiting all

the parks and monuments in this area of the Grand Circle - next. The impacts of not increasing fees would experience a shortfall in the campground revenue account this year, that's a pretty serious thing for us. We have borrowed from the special recreation permit account. They have increasing costs, we just don't have the money out there to supplement as was done in the past.

Shortfalls are going to create negative impacts. We think overall poor visitor services and negative impacts on the environment including the riparian environment would occur. We would consider seasonal closures because of the geography and the popularity of the site that is very difficult to enforce. We saw that with the recent government shutdown. The kinds of things that occur--we would have erosion, a routine cleaning and maintenance, we would have toilet paper littering the site, human waste issues, proliferate.

Abandoned facilities with things being locked up are just attraction for more vandalism. One of the most serious things really is the number of cars that end up parking up on Scenic Highway 12 creating traffic congestion and safety issues. If you look at the lower slide, in the middle, that shows the proximity of the entrance of the campground recreation site to Scenic Highway 12, it creates a lot of issues - next. The public outreach that we did on our proposal to increase fees started November 1 through December 6 and it ran for 35 days.

We started with a postcard that was mailed out to our mailing list of 324 organizations, businesses and individuals. I had a countertop display at all four visitor centers, we put up posters in the campground and at the restrooms - next. It was posted online as the requirement on our state office web site and our Grand Staircase web site. We issued a press release; it actually went out a week before the comment period began and then we had some articles that showed up online and hardcopy newspapers. There were some blogs and a television blog as well.

We had anticipated starting our public comment earlier and then we had the government shutdown. There was actually a little bit of information out way ahead of our comment period which turned out to be a good thing for us. The information table I did at the Escalante Arts Festival was to reach out to the local community in Escalante and people who were visiting. I got more names for a mailing list and gave out postcards. I gave a presentation to the local Kane County Resource Committee in late November - next.

This image shows the front of the postcard that we mailed out and next is the backside of the postcard and next is the summary of public comments. We had one letter and six email comments. We had a letter from the Navajo Nation and the rest were email comments. I had two respondents from the Western Slope No-Fee Coalition, one from a local a local business owner and

three from individuals. Overall, there was no opposition really to the existence of a fee program that would pay for labor and operational costs.

Far respondents suggested a fee structure less than the one proposed. One respondent expressed that they were very supportive of the price hike and thought that BLM campground prices were too low. One respondent was opposed to any fee increase at all. The Navajo Nation had a request for cultural access and no other concerns. The Western Slope No-Fee Coalition had several phone calls and written emails and correspondence related to comments on various topics.

They had some really detailed and thoughtful comments on implementation of REA, a request for defined parking for hikers. There were concerns that signage and parking clarify that people do not have to pay to park and hike. Two respondents thought that the advance reservation system should be dropped as too costly. That about wraps it up.

Thank you for your time and interest in recreation on the public land and open it up to any questions that you might have as well as requests that the recreation RAC pass a motion that the fee proposal demonstrates general public support and recommend that BLM implement the changes to the fee program as proposed, thank you.

Steve Burr: Lora, this is Steve Burr. Could you elaborate on what you received from the Navajo Nation with respect to what exactly cultural access is?

Lora: The Navajo Nation was under the impression that we charged an entrance fee and so our response to them was that we don't charge entrance fees like other parks and monuments, so that was their concern.

As well as to have traditional cultural access, we responded that BLM acknowledges and respects their claims of cultural affiliation and that access is free. They also had some other comments related to wanting to consult on some other issues but they did not have any other concerns.

Steve Burr: So do you mean charging an entrance fee as a whole to the monument?

Lora: Yes. They thought that since we were a park and monument that we had an entrance fee that charged a fee. Cultural Native American Access at Parks sometimes requires a special pass for cultural access and I think that's what their concern was. We just reiterated that we do not charge entrance fees to the monuments.

Lowell Braxton: Other comments from the RAC? This is Lowell Braxton. I'm just impressed with the overall organization of what you presented to us (Lora). Once we

could see it on the screen, I think it looks good. I personally am supporting the recommendations but that's not a RAC decision something we need to debate.

Carl Albrecht: Lora this is Carl Albrecht. I drove by there during the government shutdown and you're exactly right on. There was parking clear out on Highway 12 for a long ways in both directions and people were going around your closure sign and your gate. So, it is kind of a remote area and I feel like the increase is justified personally.

JR Nelson: I'm curious to know when this fee was established. It seems to me like for how low it was, that it had to have been a long time ago.

Lowell Braxton: It was.

Man: Seventy-seven.

JR Nelson: Seventy-seven?

Lora: Yes, we think that right after Calf Creek was designated as a recreation site in '76, there was a fee instituted and at that time there - it was a pretty dispersed use at that site which was very large camping and picnic site that would get 75 to 100 people.

The fee, at that time, I think was \$10 to \$25 for very large groups and then over time as BLM started to manage and protect the riparian zone and established campsites, it changed and became more of a camping/picnic fee operated. There was another fee increase in the late '90s, but that was the last one. Yes, many people comment on how low the fees are; they cannot believe the people who camp in the campgrounds.

Lowell Braxton: This is Lowell again, if you escalated those fees at the same rate gasoline prices have gone up since the late 1990's, you'd be considerably higher than you are but that wouldn't satisfy a lot of people, but I think you need to account for your costs too.

Steve Burr: This is Steve Burr again and Lora you're aware of this – Cory forwarded me your initial draft business plan and I reviewed that, provided some comments back to Cory, which in turn , I think was shared with Lora.

As Recreation Work Coordinator for the RAC, I would make a motion to accept a proposal for the fee to increase at Calf Creek and Deer Creek as Lora presented today, thanks.

Lowell Braxton: Discussion on the motion - Carl?

Carl Albrecht: I second it.

Lowell Braxton: Oh you second, all right. While we have a second is there a discussion on the motion ballot?

Aaron C: Pardon me Lowell...

Lowell Braxton: Please.

Aaron: ...if I could just jump in, I think our steering operating procedure is to not to formally vote until we've had the public comment period so that the public has one last shot provided, so.

Lowell Braxton: Thanks for that correction, I appreciate that. I would think one other thing we might want to consider on the motion that was just presented is there was a request for kind of - I'm kind of looking for the wording that was in there, they wanted something from the RAC supporting just the - can you get back to one of the last slides that were up there?

Cory Roegner: There's a Section 4(d)9 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act requires that general public support for a fee proposal be documented from the Utah Recreation RAC before a recommendation that's brought forward.

Lowell Braxton: That's what I was seeking, yes.

Cory: So if that could be done before we move forward with the next fee proposal, that would be appreciated.

Man: So basically the RAC is saying that we recognize that the public supports it, right?

Cory: Correct.

Man: Before just the RAC supports it?

Man: That the public...

Man: Okay.

Cory: ...yes that you recognize based upon the information that was provided to you, the public not only had an ample opportunity to provide input into the concept but that there's nothing substantial brought forth by the public that would prevent the fee proposal from being brought forward and implemented if you guys...

Lowell Braxton: Is that something we should hold on until after we've heard the public comment as well? I was going to say that would be my suggestion. Table that motion until public comment has been 12:15.

Lowell Braxton: Is there any additional discussion on this particular recommendation? Hearing none, I guess we move on to the next fee presentation – Katie, are you on the call?

(Editorial: powerpoint slide presentation provided upon request)

Rock Smith: Yes.

Rock Smith: We are here and, this is Rock Smith and Katie Stevens in the Moab Field Office for the BLM and thank you all for your time today.

We're going to tag team this, so if that becomes too annoying let us know. We're going to present a fee proposal to charge fees at six developed campgrounds that aren't currently being charged fees.

Katie Stevens: Those of you who have been to Moab know that Moab BLM has a very large campground program. We have 26 fee campgrounds with about 500 sites. We had 93,000 people camp at our campground in 2013.

Visitors come to Moab from all over the world to engage in many, many different types of recreation activities, including camping, sightseeing, biking, running rivers, rock climbing, base jumping, communing with nature, participating in all sorts of motorized activities and organized events. We have base jumping, we have slack lining - we have it all.

The benefits of our campground program include social, environmental, personal and economic because it is quite a low cost alternative to a vacation in Moab. The Moab Field Office does have six campgrounds that were built in the 1970s and '80s and they're relatively small campgrounds but for some - unknown to me anyway, reason they've never been included in the fee program.

Those six campgrounds are Bitter Creek which is east of Westwater Ranger Station. Westwater itself which has quite a nice campground, Fish Ford Hideout, Cowskin which are all between Westwater and Moab and Swasey's which some of you may think of as being in the Price Field Office, but actually it is within the Moab Field Office, although it is run by the Price Field Office. Swasey's Campground is also very highly developed and has been a non-fee campground for 40 years.

These campgrounds were built a long time ago and they're starting to show their age. They're starting to need some repairs and they've incurred costs ever since their construction which the campers in the fee campgrounds actually are now paying for. Since its use has increased of those six campgrounds as well as the cost of operation, we thought it was time to add those six campgrounds to the fee structure.

Rock Smith: Go to Slide 3. As I mentioned earlier, we do propose to start charging at six sites, as Katie mentioned.

We currently do not have fees and we have amended our business plan in a draft to account for the additional sites. I think that was provided to all of you. We do feel it does meet the requirements for the REA and there is a chart that shows what fees we would be charging the various sites. So basically Westwater and Swasey's would be \$15 and at the other four \$10. That's just dependent on how developed they were.

Katie Stevens: We have a list of the amenities. All of the six campgrounds do have camper trailer spaces, they all have picnic tables - Westwater has drinking water, it is the only one.

By the way, it's quite an expensive drinking water system because it's a reverse osmosis system, so it's quite an expense to maintain. They have access roads. The agent would collect fees. There are refuse containers at Westwater and Swasey's and what we would do for the four campgrounds that don't have refuse containers, because it would be hard for a garbage truck to get there. At Bitter Creek it's pretty close to Westwater that trash could be taken to Westwater.

At Cowskin, which is fairly close to Dewey Bridge, we would post that trash could be deposited at the Dewey Bridge Campground. All of them do have campfire rings currently.

Rock Smith: Next slide - we talk a little bit about operating costs. The five-year average expenditure is around half a million, \$300,000 of that in labor and \$200,000 in non-labor operational costs.

Because fees are currently not collected at those sites that we're dealing with today, they're actually being maintained with fees collected from other sites. Partly because the labor that does the maintenance at those sites is paid for with fee money and that includes things like maintenance workers to law enforcement officers. At the reservation office, we have a clerk and two park rangers that help patrol the campgrounds.

Maintenance workers, besides just cleaning, they also build and repair campground facilities, garbage collection, by the rest rooms - they even do invasive plant species control in the campgrounds, and adjacent grounds to the campgrounds. The campgrounds have incurred costs through the years and will be doing so with more frequency in the future with no associated revenue unless this proposal's passed.

Katie Stevens: And next slide. The fee site revenues, and this is for the 26 campgrounds that we do have on the fee program, collect about a half a million dollars over the past five years in 2013, thanks to the fee increase that the RAC granted in 2012.

We collected \$666,000 which sounds like a lot of money, but we have big expenses and we also had an 8% increase in campers last year as well as enjoyed the benefit in the fee increase. The total anticipated revenue for 2014, if we have another increase like we had last year and should we get granted the fee authorization for the six campgrounds that currently are not on the fee structure, would be \$714,000.

Rock Smith: Next slide. These six campgrounds - the use has actually been increasing quite a bit at these sites and because of that, the age of the facilities and how infrequently we get out there, require more costly maintenance all the time.

The facilities as Katie mentioned are getting pretty old. We'd like to upgrade them. We'd also like better define them and add some more sites because of the use increase at those sites. Basically charging fees would enable the users of those sites to contribute toward those increasing costs.

Katie Stevens: Mext slide which is kind of covered on Slide 8, the use of the proposed fees. Those would cover the operating costs of these campgrounds, including cleaning, maintenance of the, as I said, very expensive Westwater water system, toilet pumping, garbage collection.

Some of you might be familiar - I know Brian would be - with the Swasey's Campground. Tthere's a couple big dumpsters there and they fill up a lot. No one who's camping at the campground is paying for those dumpsters currently. Tthose operating costs are just being borne by the campers at the other campgrounds and then if we had additional funds we could also get new picnic tables out there.

Some of the fire rings are cracking. We need new fire rings and to get those new campsites and improve the roads a little bit.

Rock Smith: Next slide, dealing with social economic impact and same with the Staircase. We don't expect this proposal to be too onerous on the public. In fact, surveys

we've done in the past have shown that visitors to Moab have probably a higher income than the average in the US.

Our campgrounds do offer very low and alternative to vocational alternatives. We really don't think that this proposal would add too much to anyone's...

Katie Stevens: Of a financial burden.

Rock Smith: ...of a financial burden, right.

Katie Stevens: Right, so the next slide--the no action alternative. If the fee proposal is not implemented, there could be a reduction in services, especially at those six campgrounds just as they're becoming increasingly popular.

The cleaning might have to be curtailed and the campground facilities would definitely continue to degrade just from age and maybe overuse. In the long-run those campgrounds might even be thought to be cost ineffective. They would have to be closed, thus the services would be reduced and then people would camp anyway but without benefit of toilets, so environmental damage could therefore result.

Rock Smith: Next slide, public outreach efforts. We've had articles in both of our local papers. The information about this proposal has been on the BLM web sites, including the state web sites or Moab BLM web site.

Katie Stevens: It's number one highlighted at the beginning of the Moab BLM web site.

Rock Smith: It's been pretty well represented on the web sites anyway. Then we've had a copy of the amended business plan available.

Katie Stevens: On the web site as well is a hardcopy here in the office.

Rock Smith: Right.

Katie Stevens: Now as a result of the public outreach effort, we got one comment. It was by email. It was from a woman in Green River, Utah, and since she provided her phone number I called her back and talked to her.

She had thought that there was going to be a day use fee at Swasey's Beach and the answer is now, this only applied to the campground. We had actually a very nice conversation. She was very supportive of the proposal once she heard there wasn't going to be a day's fee for Green River residents. She commended the Price Field Office for taking such good care of Swasey's with no money to do so.

She said every time she's been there it's been clean and everything else. She wanted the boating parking lot expanded. I passed that onto Price. I can't say her letter was opposed, it really was an inquiry. I answered her inquiry and she voiced no objection to the fee increase - to the fees proposal.

Rock Smith: Have we received other comments?

Katie Stevens: No we only received that one email comment.

Rock Smith: Does the RAC have any questions we might answer.

Brian: Yes Rock and Katie this is Brian, good to hear from you guys.

Rock Smith: Hi Brian.

Brian: First question, is this all campers? For example, sometimes we spend the night there - the night before a trip the guys will spend a night as a special recreation permit holder. Do we get charged the camping fee as?

Rock Smith: The answer would be yes.

Brian: Okay. I was a little confused about the numbers here. On Slide 5, I think it said the total costs were \$500,000. Was that for all campgrounds in the area or for just the ones in question?

Katie Stevens: All campgrounds.

Rock Smith: All campgrounds.

Katie Stevens: All 26 - Goose Isle and Dewey Bridge, Horsethief - all of our campgrounds.

Brian: Then the projected revenue with this increase would be somewhere over \$700

Katie Stevens: We're not expecting these little campgrounds to really make that much money, we're projecting \$15,000.

Rock Smith: We're hoping they meet their expenses as they occur.

Katie Stevens: Yes, we're just trying for breakeven only on the campgrounds.

Rock Smith: We estimate that they'll probably make about \$15,000 all together, a year.

Katie Stevens: The reason that we're projecting it going up from 2013 is that we did have an 8% increase in campground numbers last year, so if we have another increase

and have the \$15,000, that's where we came up with 714 - and it is a projection.

Rock Smith: The five-year average is a little misleading because that's over five years and costs have increased considerably.

Brian: The way I read it is that you're making a little over 200 grand a year.

Rock Smith: No, actually the last two years we've spent more than we've made, but that's partly because we've been increasing facilities. We've improved things like adding shelters to group sites and added additional campsites and we can hope to continue to do that.

Brian: Right. You've been doing great work and there's need for more group campsites if there's any opportunities but it's certainly my input. It's crazy that these aren't being charged for these particular sites and especially Swasey's and Westwater, but because they all do get used heavily.

JR: Swasey's the take out point on the Green or is that the...

Rock Smith: It's the take out point for the Green River but they have some developed camping area there. Some people camp there at the end of their trip and others are just people who come out - it's a popular spot for locals to come out and youth groups sometimes.

JR: Right. It does have a nice beach adjacent to it so there's a lot of days and there is camping for people just to come and kind of enjoy the river locally.

Katie Stevens: A lot of people come down from Salt Lake and they'll bring their inflatables and just do the Green River daily, maybe twice on the weekend and camp there.

When I've been there, a lot of the campers have been from Salt Lake because it's not that far a drive from Salt Lake. Brian, we do have more ideas for some more group sites. As you know we just added one at Hittle Bottom last year and we hope that will well serve the boating community.

Brian: I very much appreciate it, thank you.

Lowell Braxton: Any additional comments from the RAC?

Steve Burr: This is Steve Burr. Do you want another motion and hopefully second any other discussion then table it again to have your public comment?

Lowell Braxton: Well I think that's what we need to do Steve, thank you.

Rock Smith: I'll read the request if you want. It says request the RAC to pass the motion that proposes - that the proposal demonstrates general public support and recommend it to be able to implement the changes to the fee program as proposed.

Lowell Braxton: Thank you.

Steve Burr: Steve Burr again, as recreation RAC for coordinator, again Cory sent me the proposed amendment to the plan. I reviewed that, sent comments back to him so I would make a motion that we accept the proposal that has been presented.

JR Nelson: Seconded from JR Nelson.

Lowell Braxton: Thank you, we have a motion and second and I think per our earlier discussion we need to table this until after the public comment period later today. We have a break scheduled now, we're getting ahead of schedule, how does the RAC want to proceed? Should we take a break or should we keep moving?

Woman: Keep moving.

Lowell Braxton: Keep moving, very good. This would bring us to the Forest Service portion of the agenda - do we have somebody from Manti-La Sal onboard?

Man: Probably not yet.

Lowell Braxton: Well, maybe we take a break right now then.

Sherry Foot: Okay, for purposes of the folks here in the office let's go ahead and take a break time. For those individuals on the phone, let's go ahead a break for about 15 minutes and I am going to place the phone on mute.

Man: What time back?

Sherry Foot: 9:45.

Man: Nine-forty-five, okay.

Sherry Foot: Those on the call thank you for your patience. Again, we are running ahead of schedule. We've contacted those individuals that have been scheduled for later times to see if they could come in a little bit earlier and Lowell if you don't mind if I just go ahead and...

Lowell Braxton: Please go ahead.

Sherry Foot: Okay, I have asked Juan if he wouldn't mind terribly just filling in some time to chat with us about what's happening in Utah. In the meantime, I will go ahead and make sure that the others show up, so if it's okay Lowell if I turn the time over to Juan.

Lowell Braxton: Take it away Juan.

Juan: Lowell, thank you. I think we should cover a couple of items.

I'll begin with Sage grouse, to kind of let you know from my perspective about where we are. We had a meeting in Denver right at the end of September with all of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) people, the Forest Service, the BLM and a host of other individuals. The purpose of that meeting was to begin to take a look at our draft document which is out for public review right now. The public review is all the way up to the end of this month.

I think that many of our citizens, many of the organizations are looking at that and providing comments and you as a RAC are also having comments. We have another meeting scheduled with the FWS as well as a BLM and the Forest Service in Portland, Oregon on the week of the 10th of February. That's where we're beginning to talk about how we incorporate all these comments which we're probably going to get in thousands and thousands of comments.

How in the world are we going to sort all those comments in a very short timeframe and begin to focus our determination on the final? The Secretary and others have had conversations with governors and others as to where is the direction of this planning effort including our goal from the BLM is that we made a void on this and that's the end result that we're looking for, voiding the list if at all possible. We think that all the mitigation measures that we have are focused toward--none listed on the species.

The other thing I wanted to mention is we are working together with FWS to address their concerns because we don't want to go until the end of 2014 just to find out that whatever we were doing from the BLM does not suffice the FWS. The reason we're meeting with them is to ask them if they have any concerns. It's better for us to know now rather than later because it may be too late for us to adjust at that point in time.

By order of the court, we have to provide or at least not to us but the FWS, we have to provide our plan and efforts by around September, early October of this year so that the FWS can have enough time to review our documents and then respond to the court. We want to be able to stay in good coordination

with the FWS on this very important topic. That's the purpose of those conversations.

As it relates to the state, we have worked with the state and I would say that we're probably in the 90% alignment with the state of Utah. There are some places where we're not exactly the same. It's in the 90% that we are clearly identified as Sage grouse habitat. There are at least two major areas where we have a difference right now and I think we probably will resolve it.

That's one of the differences that we have. The state does not believe that those are critical areas. Currently, we believe that those are some of the differences that we're trying to figure out. The state and Kathleen Clarke have done a great job. She has been the face in the Sage grouse with the counties and all those kinds of individuals and entities, not only has she been very busy dealing and talking and addressing the concerns of locals from her perspective.

I've got a meeting with Kathleen next week. I believe it's the 14th is the day that I meet with her just to review where we are on the Sage grouse issue. And again as we work towards the summer, September of 2014, my goal would be in my ideal world is that the FWS, BLM, the state, all of us will be on the same page. Right now I think we are probably getting closer. We'll work together very close together over the next few weeks. Ideally we'll all be the same but that's our goal that I'd like to do.

Lowell Braxton: Are you going to incorporate the state maps into your planning document rather than the ones that came from the technical team?

Juan: I can't answer your question directly affirmatively yet Lowell because once we decide on which of the alternatives or a combination of alternatives - and so when we get all done with our plan and effort it may not just be one of the alternatives that we select, it may be a piece of this alternative and a piece of this one and a piece of that one.

So not knowing how that's going to be, it may look a little different than even our map today and even look a little different in the state map. That's why I can't answer the question so positively what the map exactly will look like.

Lowell Braxton: Maybe I'll off base but I understand the map that's in the draft EIS is 10- or 12-year old map and the state maps are much more current than that - and if you're going to use the best available science I'd encourage you to look at that.

Juan: Yes, certainly the state is the keeper of that. So we'll have to between now and then again we'll probably have to take a look from maps, no that's a good comment.

Lowell Braxton: Thanks for that.

Juan: I was prepared to go into all the topics but I think the Forest Service presenters are here and maybe just one more topic Sherry that I'd like to just share with you.

You'll probably see me going in and out today and I got a couple of conference calls and some next week. There's a very high probability that the Secretary will be here in town not next week but the week after that and so we're working to get an agenda. I know every time we have someone coming to town, you have people running around trying to figure out what exactly they're going to do and how many minutes and where's their place on the floor.

I'm working on that right now, as well next week, when she arrives here and there's a good chance she will be here in town and probably we'll meet with the governor and I don't know all they're going to meet with but other folks as well. The last thing that - I got so many things that I could share with you, but I just want to share one more thing. You know, we've had a lot of wounded warriors that come back from Afghanistan and Iraq over the last few years and we have worked with many of those institutions.

I want to turn back to the parent who do seem critical in developing those agreements where we've taken in all of the Green River, the Colorado River, the San Juan River as a therapy method to say, you know, if you can make it through some of the rapids and this high (CF) water you can make it through life. And they've done several trips, you know, we've got several trips that we've worked with Disabled Force USA.

Some of those veterans may have a mental challenge of the war, some have missing limbs, and so we're working with them and I wanted to let you know that I'm very pleased with the work of our staff and many others on that. There's one more thing that is occurring on this one and that is that we're planning another trip with several disabled veterans around first part of May.

This would be up in the Monticello Field Office that will probably that them up towards Cedar Mesa area they'll be about, you know, several of us working right now with the Navajo Nation but we will have I think there's only a few remaining alive over their Navajo code-talkers in World War II and there's only one or two or three that's alive that are left. We're going to get them to go with us and take some of those veterans and take them together and then we'll have a good visit with them.

Then subsequently we'll take them out on one or two or three-day night camp outs. We'll actually camp out with the veterans and then bring them back. This will be with a program that we're trying to do for the first time in BLM. It will be the first one and this will be with the Sierra Club, with the Navajo Nation and others. I wanted to let you know that's going and we're planning that trip right now, we're just trying to solidify exactly what we can and what days we're going to do that.

It is really important I believe that we welcome these veterans back and that we provide a kind of venue for them to regain, for some, at least their self that they can overcome whatever obstacles in life. We do get involved in all kinds of stuff, all kinds of issues, all kinds of problems, all kinds of projects, all kinds of concerns.

But we cannot forget that there are things that are equally as important and this topic is one of those and I think it is equally as important as any other project that we do. Sometimes we don't talk about it enough and we don't sort of highlight it enough but I wanted to mention to you that that's ongoing and that if any of you ever wanted to go with me on some of the things for you to see I'd welcome you to go with me and experience it for yourself what it's all about. I better stop there, but we can talk about so many things that are going on at BLM.

Lowell Braxton: Thanks very much for that Juan.

Sherry Foot: Lowell, may I just interrupt for just a moment?

Lowell Braxton: Please.

Sherry Foot: We have some guests. I'd like to have them introduce themselves for purposes of recordkeeping. Guests that have arrived, we are recording this meeting for purposes of minute taking. I'd ask that you would sign the register outside, as well, but if you would introduce yourselves please.

Ray Kelsey: My name's Ray Kelsey. I'm an Operation Planner at the West Desert District Office, Salt Lake City.

Jennifer: I'm Jennifer Evans, I'm out of Richfield.

Myron Jeffs: Myron Jeffs, the Recreation Planner, Hanksville.

Melinda: Melinda Moffitt, Utah State Office

Joanna Wilson: I'm Joanna Wilson with the Forest Service Regional Office in Ogden, Utah.

Bill Broadbear: Bill Broadbear , Recreation, I'm with the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

Lowell Braxton: Thanks Sherry, this brings us to the part of the agenda for the fee presentations from the US Forest Service, Manti-La Sal National Forest.

Bill Broadbear: Joanna is just now passing out our Forest Service fee reports to all of you and we're thankful to be here today to present to you. I think we've got a couple interesting proposals here for you to consider. The handouts have this information as well as all the slides that we'll be going through on the PowerPoint.

Joanna: Some of you actually have a copy of some of this - this has actually been updated, so replace this with the one in your packets.

Bill Broadbear: My name is Bill Broadbear, I work in the Recreation and Trails on Manti-La Sal out of Price, Utah. We've got two proposals that we're going to talk about.

The first one to consider has to do with the Lake Canyon Recreation Area, the Miller Flat Area and these are overviews of some of the surrounding landscapes in that area. The Lake Canyon Recreation Area is specifically within there and we're going to talk about some new sites which we are calling Miller Flat Campground. Just to orient you, the Lake Canyon Recreation Area is about midway between Highway 6 on the north and I-70 on the south.

Where that arrow's pointing, it's about right in the middle of the Wasatch Plateau. Here's an aerial view of the site, the Lake Canyon area running north and south, right through the middle of this road right here, this is the Miller Flat Road which is a very high-use gravel road that takes visitors from Highway 31 on the north down to Joe's Valley on the south, it's about a 20 mile segment of road. Off of that road there is just a tremendous amount of recreation use that occurs, both sides of the road all the way down.

Currently in the Lake Canyon area, this lays out what we have there. There are 89 single family campsites all up and down through the first ten-mile section of road. Forty-two of those are fee sites and just over the last couple of years, we've added 47 new sites. Of those 47 new sites, 44 will stay free, first come, first serve to the public but under this proposal we are proposing to add three new fee sites which will basically come up to about a 50/50 mix of fee and free sites within this area.

Currently, there are nine reserveable group sites within the Lake Canyon area, there are five group sites and four single family sites that are reserveable. Under this proposal, we're proposing to add one new group site, giving us a total of ten reserveable sites. Those group sites accommodate anywhere from

20 to up to 150 people. Accessible sites are scattered throughout this whole area to accommodate that need.

So this is focusing in on the specific area within those 47 sites where we're proposing to add fees. Up here is the group site and then you see the three single family sites that we're proposing to add. It's got a new gravel road into it; right here you could probably see a building, that's the new toilet facility that went in. You can see it's intermixed with all the green tent shapes, those are all free sites.

You can see that intermingling of fee sites with the free sites. As required for expanded amounts of these fees sites, we must be able to provide five of nine amenities and this is also in your handout. Access roads - we have gravel two-wheel drive road in there, fire rings at the site, a roving campground host that takes care of this whole area - actually two people and that's their job is to work in this area.

There's a self-service fee station, vault toilet facility, picnic tables at each site. There's no water, garbage collection, or tent pads at these sites. You can see there on the left side of the three single family sites, we're proposing to charge a fee of \$5.00 per vehicle per night which is exactly what we're charging within the rest of the Lake Canyon Recreation Area. This is just an example of one of those single family sites.

At the group site, we also have to provide five of those nine amenities and you can see those again on the right-hand side. We have a gravel road, fire ring, campground host, and reservation system. This site would go on the reservation system. If it's not reserved, however, it would still be available to visitors on the \$5.00 per vehicle per night. The group site can accommodate up to 50 people and we're proposing a fee there of \$50 per night. This is just a view of the group site that's in place and these were just put in in the last year or two.

Up on this end, that's a fire pan for our visitors, a utility table - they'll get a lot of use especially with big family reunions, gatherings that we see all the time up there. This is just an overview of the Lake Canyon Recreation Area, just giving you a feel for what it looks like up there. Open, rolling terrain, there's access to three major reservoirs which you see a consistent amount of use all through the summer and the fall. I want to talk a little bit about the importance of the development that's taking place within this area.

Because of that open rolling terrain the high concentration of wetlands, it's actually the highest concentration of wetlands on the forest (through this Miller Flat area). Several years ago, we started working in there to contain the recreation use which was pretty much kind of a free-for-all; people were

going, driving wherever they wanted to go. We improved road access and we constructed trailer infrastructure specifically ATV infrastructure because there's a tremendous amount of ATV use.

With those trails, we were able to connect everyone from the campsites to the fisheries to the trail system - they could ride right from their campsite, and get to those amenities. By constructing the facilities, we were able to focus use where we needed and wanted to see use, and close several miles - three miles of road were closed that were causing resource damage.

Thinking back to the three family sites and the group site, what would we see there as far as our predictions for financials? Operation and maintenance cost, this would just be another stop basically for the recreation goes to the host that were working in that area. We figure around \$500 in operations and maintenance annually. We're predicting we might generate around \$3000 in revenue for the group site, \$2000 for the single family sites.

Overall development costs were \$40,000, which mainly was the road getting into there. I've already touched on this somewhat but what opportunities are available from these sites; ATV trails which I've already mentioned. The Lake Canyon trail system--there's ten miles just within this camping area connecting all those destinations. Hiking is featured in some areas, there's a national recreation trail Left Fork at Huntington within this area and horseback riding.

To our visitors, I thought you might be interested in that, the three surrounding local counties Carbon, Sanpete and Emery but surveys that we did in there when we started this development around 2000. 2002 we found that 60% of our visitation comes from Utah and Salt Lake County. It's a real easy drive for those folks. I wanted to make you aware of all the public involvement actions we've done for this - adding these four sites to the Lake Canyon area.

As noted there, I probably don't need to read through all of these but the FRN was published April 1, Legal Notice April 2 - that went in our two papers - newspapers that cover this area - Sun Advocate out of Carbon County, Emery County Progress, Emery County. News releases on March 26. We also posted notices throughout the campground letting people know that this was being proposed.

On June 15, the proposal went on our web sites both forest and regionally and we went to the elected officials back in April and then updated them again in November about where we were at with this process. That was the Public Lands Council Meeting, Emery County which was attended by the commissioners and state legislatures. We were able to touch base with everyone we thought

might have an interest in this. We have the recreation guard already working in that area, soliciting comments from the people who were actually there in those sites.

We started last fall during the hunt and did it again all this summer. We received 15 comments in the fall and 230 more throughout the summer, this past summer. As you can see, the comments were overwhelmingly positive. Out of the 242 positive comments, only three negative comments and those basically were centered around the idea that they didn't really want to have to reserve the site because they come there all the time and couldn't they just take their chances first come, first serve.

Sure they could, but being able to reserve a group site is very desired by most people. That's the first half of my presentation having to do with the Miller Flat Area and within the Lake Canyon Recreation Area, are there any questions on that portion of my presentation before I move into the Orange Olsen cabins?

Lowell Braxton: Questions or comments from the RAC?

JR: There was some debate whether or not this was in Sanpete County or Emery County. It gets very close to the border.

Bill Broadbear: It is in Emery County. The Miller Flat Road goes in and out of the county line.

Lowell Braxton: Please proceed.

Bill Broadbear: We'll move on to the Orange Olsen cabins. These cabins are located about 20 miles south of the Lake Canyon area that we just talked about, on the Wasatch Plateau around the Joe's Valley area. Here's an aerial photograph it lets you have some idea where this is.

Many of you are familiar with Joe's Valley Reservoir. The yellow line here is Highway 29 going up and around the north end of the Reservoir and on over the top of the mountain to Ephraim. The green tent stakes there are the recreation infrastructure that's there. We have a marina there, a large campground with about 50 sites and a large group use site with a pavilion accommodating up to 100 people.

The cabins are within that area and you can see they are really close by. Just to give you a little idea of how those cabins came to be there, back in the 1950s, the Bureau of Reformation decided to construct Joy's Valley Reservoir and the old ranger station was called the Park Ranger Station that was down at the bottom of the valley and it was going to be inundated by the waters of the

Reservoir. The station was actually picked up and moved over to its new location which is where Orange Olsen is now.

In 1965, the dwelling was also constructed and from 1966 on it was known and the Orange Olsen Administrative Site and used administratively for most of the last 50 years. However in the last eight to ten years, we've seen very little need for it administratively. Here's the dwelling. Here's the new building that was constructed and you can see on the left what's available there. We have a flush toilet, shower, running water from a spring development, propane, and gas that powers all the appliances there.

There's tent space around the building and you can sleep up to six people. In this site, we would propose to put on the recreation.gov web site. It would be \$60 per night. This just gives you some idea of the interior, so that's the kitchen area of the dwelling. And as far as the renovations that we did last year, we did get a new refrigerator and stove to make it a little bit more useful.

This is the front room, again kind of on the other side of the kitchen. This is the cabin and it's located about 200 feet away from the dwelling. It has basically the same amenities that we just discussed, toilet facility, shower, running water - as you can see not quite as many can be accommodated there, up to four people. It would also be reserveable for \$40 per night.

Just across the road and you can't see it in this photo but about right where I'm holding my paper there are four trailer pads that have water hookups. If people decide to reserve and rent this cabin, they would also be able to bring their trailer and hook it up to water.

This is the interior of the cabin, a little table and chairs in the kitchen. These are the bunk beds in the bedroom, so it's like a two-room cabin with a kitchen on one side of the front room. This aerial photo gives you an idea of the layout of the dwelling that we just discussed on the left, the cabin on the right and the four trailer pads.

There's about 200 feet between them and elevationally they're also different. One's about 30 or 40 feet higher and screened by those large Juniper trees. In our estimation, if someone wanted to come in and rent both sites, they could be close by. However if they don't, if they're separate parties, there's a sufficient amount of screening between the dwelling and the cabin so that they can co-exist and not really know the other person's that close.

Here are our estimates on the financial information for the cabins; for both the dwelling and the cabin operations of maintenance cost around \$500 a year. The hosts take care of these all summer long, so it's literally within a half mile

of where their trailer is located. They take care of the campgrounds. It would not be too much to also take care of the cabins and post reservations, etc.

Our predicted revenue is as shown \$4000 and \$2000 respectively. Development cost – \$10,000 was spent on the dwelling, some of that were the appliances and some improvements made to the interior. The cabin was completely renovated and was in pretty tough shape. We tore it out to the studs and then reconstructed it, so that's the \$40 - or \$30,000 cost.

As far as recreation opportunities within the area, again you have Joe's Valley Reservoir which you can see there just up the road, fishing, boating, the Arapeen trail. Visitors, again it's somewhat similar to what we discussed for the Lake Canyon Recreation Area - Emery, Carbon County primarily.

Some from Sanpete County and then the Wasatch Front is also a major component of visitation. Not as high as what we see further north in the Lake Canyon Area but still significant. So why do we want to institute these fees at these sites? We're really providing a new opportunity. The public has always viewed those cabins as administrative sites and now they will have this opportunity to rent these cabins and stay there.

The response that we've gotten elsewhere on this same division and on the Wasatch Plateau where we've done this has been very positive. We have two other guard stations that we've already put into the cabin program, Seely Guard Station and Indian Creek Guard Station up Fern Canyon and it took maybe a year or so for people to catch on. Since then, they've been booked almost every day, all summer long.

Our anticipation is that these sites also will see a lot of use. What would the fees be used for? They would go to the operation and maintenance of the sites by the recreation guards. The crew, they take care of them, general maintenance and upkeep. We want to go through the public involvement actions that we undertook about these cabins. The FRN went in July.

The recreation guard that worked there posted notices that we were considering this, all around the reservoir, specifically of the campground, marina, and pavilion. A legal notice went in on July 16 to the two local papers again. Forest and regional web sites posted the proposal. We briefed the commissioners, the public land council in Emery County on June 4 and updated them November 5.

We heard support from the public lands council, the commissioners, everyone there. The recreation guard, as well as posting information about this, also tried to talk to people while he was doing his duties. He talked to only 15

people, but again, everyone there was excited to hear that they might have a chance to get in and use those cabins, and rent them.

That's it. Thank you. Any questions I can answer?

Bill H.: Yes, I'm not sure I understood the littler one, the cabin or bunkhouse, the \$40 fee gets trailer hook ups?

Bill B: It does. Yes, that includes the trailers.

Steve S: If the trailer hook ups are not rented with a cabin, can somebody use them anyway?

Bill: No, they would only go with the cabin, because they're in such close proximity it just really wouldn't work out to have two parties that didn't know each other.

Steve S: Thanks for that.

Bill: Yes. Any other questions I can answer?

JR: How about a comment. I highly recommend this spot. You can't go wrong, I don't care what you want to do. They have Tiger Muskies now.

Man: I thought you had imported that fish from Alaska or something.

Frank W: It's a real live, isn't it.

Man: Yes.

Man: I'll buy a story.

Man: A little bit.

Man: It's a beautiful spot isn't it?

Man: It is amazing.

Man: Is the ATV use pretty good down there?

Bill: Yes it is. The Arapeen Trail System went in 2000. The Northern end of it is pretty much up in Lake Canyon Recreation Area, but the Joe's Valley Area is right in the heart of it.

Man: Are you guys doing anything to kind of like promote it, or can you?

Bill: The Arapeen Trail?

Man: No.

Bill: We've worked with state of Utah. They've published a map for us every year. It sees a tremendous amount of use. We have counters out there.

The nearest trail is the Reeder Canyon Trail to the Orange Olsen Cabins there at Joe's Valley. It consistently sees 3000 to 4000 ATVs every summer. It's high use area.

Man: I like to hear that.

Man: It's kind of self-publicized too. Somebody goes up there and they go back and tell their friends, "Oh my gosh, I went to this amazing place and these amazing trails." And, "Where is it?" And they're up there the next...

Man: I would say, "You know, behind the Paiute Trail System, which I think a lot of people have heard of, this is probably the next highest used trail system in the state."

Lowell Braxton: This is Lowell Braxton, is there a recommendation from the RAC on how to proceed on this, knowing we must defer final approval until after public comment?

Steve Burr: This is Steve Burr. I am the RecRAC coordinator. Cory forwarded what Joanna had forwarded to him. I reviewed, sent it back, and - so I would make motion to accept the proposal as presented.

Carl Albrecht: Second that.

Lowell: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Unless there's additional discussion on this, I think we'll just postpone our decision until after the public comment period. Thank you very much, you're a very well-organized group division.

Bill: Thank you, thank you for your help.

Lowell: This leaves us with another hole in our agenda right now I guess doesn't it? Sherry how do you want to go.

Sherry Foot: I am going to go ask about having Sage grouse presented early.

Man: So we'll do the Sage Grouse Presentation between now and 11:15? Perfect.
Thank you for that.

Juan: Waiting for Quincy to get here, let me just say that I, like yourself, am so impressed with the presentations this morning from everybody that presented. I thought the presentations were concise. As they flowed, conclusions flowed. So I just wanted to say, "Compliments to all the folks that made the presentations." I thought they were good.

Man: Yes, and Aaron had a role in that, we need to thank him for it. Because this went very, very smoothly I thought.

Steve Burr: Steve Burr, just another comment. The difference between the Forest Service proposals and the BLM, is that the Forest Service is making an effort to actually talk to the recreationists that are using the facilities, about these fee proposals. And I think that's good.

I mean what you presented is that there was overall support among the actual users there. So I guess I would recommend that maybe the BLM consider that.

For example, if some of the hosts at Calf Creek could go around and talk to some of these, and say, "Hey, you know, we're thinking of raising the fees, and this is the reason why. What did you think?" Because as I remember - was it Deer Creek where only one comment was received?

Lora: Hi Steve, this is Lora. We actually did that in September, late September. During the week of the Escalante Arts Festival, I went through the campground and I had the host do the same. That's our primetime for visitation there; we talk to people a lot.

Everyone anecdotally said they were whole-heartedly in support of a fee increase, and they couldn't believe how low the fees were. They really loved camping there. And it was a really positive contact. But yes, I agree, talking to the recreationists is really insightful.

JR: I'd rather comment, and this another side light. Bill is aware of this, but Joe's Valley is a world renown bouldering location. We literally have people come from all over the world to go to Joe's Valley and climb on rocks.

I mean literally we have had people from Australia, all over Europe. I took a couple of guys from Spain down on our San Rafael to show them some sites, couple of guys from Mexico City, I did the same thing. This is right there.

Bill, what is it, two or three miles ...

Bill Broadbear: Just down the canyon.

JR: These are highly educated, really in great shape people, and some of them frankly have means and would love a place like this to go stay. This would be really good for boulderers who are well known.

Steve Burr: Steve Burr again. So question for you JR, in the counties (Mike Mecandles) for example, in economic development, but also I've been charged with tourism promotion. Are you incorporating that into your promotional materials?

JR: Yes. And again, this is a self-perpetuating thing. The climber's club located here in Salt Lake City will be down there, if I look in notes, I think it's the 15th. We have kind of coordinating meetings.

One of the issues is, "Oh my gosh, we've got all these climbers on our watershed." This becomes drinking water, what's the deal. It's not like the climber's club put in the port-a-potties that are very near the place we're working on parking spots, camping spots."

It's kind of interesting because you pretty much park on BLM and climb on the Forest Service. Right there. Bill, do you want to comment on that?

Bill Broadbear: Maybe BLM should implement a parking fee.

JR: Yes. Almost universally they will tell you, "We love this area because it is so inexpensive." Literally our aquatic center is listed as a place to have a shower, that's where I run into these guys, because I used to be a swimmer and will be again soon.

But I went on - I could tell that there were climbers in the dressing rooms because it smelled like a Boy Scout Troop who had been camping in. But, you know, they love these facilities, and frankly, we use cabins.

Lowell: Are we ready to move again Sherry? For the record, this is Lowell Braxton. We're going to move the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Land Use Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement portion of our agenda that was noticed for 2:00 to 5:00 up to this point right now. And if we need to, we can continue it after the public comment period.

So (Quincy) if you're available take it away.

(Editorial: Powerpoint handouts made available upon request)

Quincy Bahr: In addition to the PowerPoint, there's going to be another piece of reference. The other handouts deal with tables that are in the Draft EIS.

They will help in your review over the next few weeks as we prepare for the January 23 meeting. I'm happy to hand them out for reference purposes during this meeting and for your use over the next few weeks.

However, I do want to work my way through the presentation with you. I want to be responsive to as many questions as you have, and I want to be able to use the information from the Draft EIS, but I also don't want to overwhelm you.

I'll hand out Volume 1 because there are a couple of tables in there that I want to use as a reference as we go through this PowerPoint.

I appreciate the opportunity to present to this group again. I look forward to comments from a body as diverse as this, as far as we can improve the decision making process in relation to Sage-Grouse in Utah.

I am the planning and environmental coordinator here at the Utah State Office of the BLM. I'm also the planning lead for the Utah sub-region component of the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse planning effort as a BLM Forest Service undertaking west wide.

I'll be presenting a similar presentation that was somewhat seen as you've gone through the various public meetings that we had in November and December. We also had several meetings with various counties and this is a similar presentation.

What I find this presentation does, in addition to summarizing where we are and how we got to where we are with this Draft EIS, it also serves as a tool for discussion. As we went through our various discussions with the various county commissioners, we never made it all the way through the presentation. I want to make it through this one with this group because it sums up nicely toward the end as far as broadening out just beyond the alternative, but into the impact analysis as well.

That said, I also want to make sure that as the slides, if they raise questions, that you have an opportunity to ask them as we go. I may defer some of the questions for a future slide, or without getting sidetracked a little bit too much, so we can push through the slides. I'm planning about an hour for the presentation, and then an extra two hours for any discussions that we can go into at that point. Is that okay?

Lowell: Well I think what we need to do is accommodate the public comment period.

Quincy: Okay, at what time?

Lowell: It runs from 11:45 to 12:15, so that gives you like an hour to do that.

Quincy: I can run through the presentation. Okay. And then any further after that as we - if there's any questions further from the group, we can take them after that.

Lowell: Thanks very much.

Quincy: There's a little bit of background as to where we are, and again, some of this may be some repetition for some of you, some of it may be new. But to where we are at this point - in 2010 the Fish and Wildlife Service determined - they issued a 12-month finding wherein they determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse was warranted for listing.

And that's a crucial piece here, because as we talk about the purpose of this planning effort is to keep the bird from being listed. The FWS has already found the bird warrants listing. So at this point we're looking to turn - to change that direction.

In 2010, they found that there were other priorities, and they had a rather large list of candidate species that they wanted to spend more - focus more of their time on. Subsequent legal action against the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) dealing with a very large list of candidate species, in settling that law suit, the Service identified a series of dates by which they would identify either up or down, list it or not list it, for all of their candidate species, including at this point, the Sage-Grouse.

All those had a drop-dead, but in the settlement there was various dates set for specific species, about a dozen-ish, that were specifically called out by name in the settlement, Sage-Grouse was one of those, the Greater Sage-Grouse was one of those.

The FWS has to make a final up or down listing determination for the Greater Sage-Grouse by the end of the Fiscal Year 2015.

In their 2010 listing, the FWS has five factors that they evaluate to determine whether a species warrants listing or not. If the species warrants listing for any one of those factors, it is eligible for listing. For the Greater Sage-Grouse, it met two of those criteria.

One of them here being, "The present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of habitat or range." That's Factor A. And then Factor D, is, "The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms."

As far as the BLM speak goes, this is our RMPs and the Forest Service through land management plans, the Service determined they were inconsistent and insufficient range-wide to provide protection, or provide certainty of protection going forward.

The principle regulatory mechanism in ours (BLM) - we also have instruction memorandum, and other policies, but the FWS identified our resource management plans and the land on resource management plans or forest plans. Providing that direction is better in these land use plans that the FLPMA directs us to prepare to provide long-term allocation and management direction to manager our public lands.

So with that being the direction for us, and the National Forest Management Act for the Forest Service, it's those plans that form the basis for the certainty going forward. So that's what the Service has looked at, focused most on, in their evaluation.

The interesting aspect for us, if there is one to be had, is that rather than listing in 2010, finding it as a deferred for other priorities, gave the Forest Service and the BLM an opportunity to address some of those factors that the Service identified in their determination, specifically on a range-wide basis.

If inadequate regulatory mechanisms were an issue, we could address that. And so that's what we've undertaken with this planning process. Range wide between the BLM and the Forest Service there's 98 land use plans involved in the Greater Sage-Grouse land use planning effort.

They are being amended through a series of 15 EISs, some of them are full of revisions, Buffalo RMP up in Wyoming was ongoing when this came out, and so they had to do a supplement to their draft. And others, like ours in Utah, are new starts looking specifically at the Sage-Grouse issue. Amendments for - in Utah - it's 14 BLM land use plans and 6 Forest Service plans throughout Utah.

The intent of this planning effort is to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse, to potentially avoid that listing. And again, that's - we start getting into a lot of the - throughout discussions that I've had there's a lot of questions of jurisdiction.

The ultimate responsibility for determining whether the species is warranted for listing in 2015 is the Fish and Wildlife Services. We are looking to address the issues that they had raised in their 2010 finding, and looking to - looking through the literature, we're working closely with the state and with the Fish

and Wildlife Service both in trying to make sure that the issues raised in that 2010 listing are addressed in our amendments.

But in the end, as far as this certainty aspect of, "Will this do it?" Well that's up to the Service to determine. We're working closely with them to make sure that we cover those bases. So in the end the intent here is to keep the species off the Endangered Species List.

This is a bit of repetitious piece, and I'm going to step over here so I don't block anyone's view. It's - in relation to the last bullet in the previous slide, this is a perfect cut out of the document right now, it's Section 2.9 of our Draft EIS.

The purpose is to identify and incorporate those conservation measures needed to conserve, enhance or restore habitat by reducing, eliminating or minimizing the threats.

Now the other aspect in relation to it is this bottom sentence, is that the BLM and the Forest Service still have multiple use mandates. One of those mandates relates to the protection of the species, it also balances with other - the other identified uses of the landscapes that are identified in both NFMA and FLPMA. So our purpose in these includes that as well in the component. So it - there's a bit of a balancing still going on here.

As we do go forward in identifying the top part of this one, the balancing act in that regard is - often comes down to two words, flexibility and certainty. The Service is looking for some certainty that the actions being proposed in the various alternatives will provide protection to Sage-Grouse in the long-term. That's what they're looking for.

The agencies with the multiple use mandate and some of the differences between the large landscape level plans and local decision making are looking to retain some of the flexibility to be able to adapt the plans to the local level. Those two don't always go together.

The - we're often reminded that we have had the ultimate flexibility for the past however many years, and that's what's gotten to the point of where we are with the listing determination. So we're trying to find that balance between providing sufficient specificity in the plan decisions, to provide certainty, while also retaining as much flexibility as possible. Too much on the other side, and it has predictable consequences.

To put it into context with how Utah fits into those, our 20 land use plans fit into context with those 98. Up here is a - obviously it's a map of West. And Sage-Grouse stretch from Calgary, or Alberta, and North and South Dakota all

the way down to - there's the bi-state population is not a part of our planning effort right here. It's right now - I think March is when its period closes for its actual listing determination, neither is the Gunnison population, which is in a similar condition as the bi-state.

There are birds from Greater Sage-Grouse that extend over into California, so it's a huge range. And it's often been said that, you know, "The BLM has never undertaken - or the federal government, has never undertaken this broad of a planning process that encapsulates as much land as this is looking at."

Each of those points on there is a Sage-Grouse lek. They are breeding grounds where they display in the spring. They are color coded based on the density of the birds on those leks. And what that means is if you have 1000 birds, 250 - it's broken out by 25% segments. So you have some leks that have more birds basically.

So you have it broken by four, you can see some of these redder areas throughout. Those are the densest leks. We have some in here on Parker, some here in Rich. Overall, Utah has 5 - a little less than 5% of the birds, the breeding males. We have a little - about 5% of the habitat identified range wide in Utah.

Now, on one aspect, the question is, "Well what then, you know, how are we important in providing that protection?" Wyoming in contrast has about 50% of the birds. They're obviously a huge piece of conservation going forward. However, there is the concept of redundancy and resiliency of populations, and that's where some of those further formed populations come into account.

The Powder River Basin up in Wyoming has a lot of both coal and gas development, and they also have recently had some issues with West Nile virus. And the concern is that if you put all the conservation efforts into one huge population and some fantastic event hits, that you end up with an extinction problem. If you don't have some of those redundant and - other redundant populations available to be able to ensure longevity of the species.

While we are a very small piece, we play that role in the broader picture of conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse.

This is zooming into Utah. This is how we're broken out as far as habitat in Utah. There's about 7.2 million acres of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat identified in Utah. I will be very clear that all habitat is not created equal. There are pieces of that habitat that have - that support more birds. Rich County supports about 1/3 of our birds in the state.

Contrast that now to South of Highway 40 in Uintah Basin, and there's less than 2% if I remember, if my numbers are right.

So the habitat quality is different. And we need to take a look at - when we're looking at the cumulative effects to Sage-Grouse, we start with everything on the table, and then start assessing different qualities, habitat qualities, different habitat quantities in different locations, the conditions.

We also, this is critical piece, with how the ownership is broken out. In Utah this planning effort is a combination of Forest Service and BLM, we're looking at less than half of the Sage-Grouse surface habitat in Utah. So we understand we are not going to be the answer in conservation of Sage-Grouse in Utah.

Private has the most singular in relation to percentage, as far as 37%. Combined, BLM and the Forest Service have about 46%, 47%, of the surface estate ownership in Utah. This is where it's critical in working with the counties and the states in addressing those other areas that - specifically in areas like Box Elder, Rich County, where there's a large percentage of private land. Where we are a piece of the puzzle, we are not the answer ourselves.

That being said, we are trying to do as much as we can in coordination with the state and with the counties as we've gone through this effort. All told in Utah, we have about 3.3 million acres of surface estate in our decision area, there's about 600,000 acres of mineral estate and areas where it is non-federal surface, but federal minerals. We are planning for those areas in so far as the minerals are concerned.

So for example, an area like Emma Park in Carbon County, large private surface, largely federal minerals. Our decisions in those areas are limited to mineral decisions. Grazing decisions, fire decisions, vegetation management decisions, none of that would apply, only those mineral decisions would apply in those areas where we have that jurisdiction.

This is a very general assessment of threats. Threats vary throughout the range of Sage-Grouse. They vary by population area as you move through the state, by SGMA, to use some terminology maybe you're more familiar with.

In general, the Service identified a split in the habitat range wide, using kind of the Rocky Mountains and the Wasatch Front as the split. On the east side of the range, infrastructure and mineral development is the greatest threat that the Service identified in their listing.

That's when you end up with a lot of the mineral production through Colorado, Northeast Utah, Wyoming, and Montana. Once you go west of that,

the greatest threat they identified was related to fire and invasive species. It was a lot of Great Basin. The fire cycle with cheatgrass and stuff like that.

That's not to say as we jump into a more specific level, there's no other threats present. If you jumped to a more specific level, the primary threat varies.

With the way that line is drawn, areas like Parker Mountain are lumped in with the Great Basin, and Parker Mountain has very little in common when it comes to fire cycles, with the Great Basin. So we recognize that the threats vary by area.

The intent of this issue is, as we addressed Chapter 2 and developed conservation measures, we focused on the various threats that were present and tried ameliorate those through the various alternatives.

I will say one that you don't see up here that has been up consistently in many meetings, public and with counties, is the issues of predation. The Service initially, in their 2010 listing, identified predation was number, what is that, C? Is that the criteria for predation.

Predation and diseases, Criteria C in the evaluation. What they identified in that 2010 finding was that range-wide predation was not the reason for listing. They did acknowledge that on a site-specific basis in local populations, predation may be an issue that is driving the health of that population.

When it comes to the BLM and the Forest Service, we have limited jurisdiction to address predation--predation, hunting, as well as some of the private land issues. Those are issues that are better addressed by the State's plan, and they are addressed in the State's plan.

As far as predation for this document, for the EIS, in Chapter 1 there is a section discussing issues that were addressed, or that were raised, but that were not carried forward into further detail discussion. And predation was identified there as an issue dealing with Sage-Grouse, but as one that - just in relation to jurisdictional authorities, the BLM and Forest Service don't have to be able to resolve that threat.

We do have a few decisions related to - in relation to projects that we permit, we want to make sure that those projects are taking into account predation in relation to not being a draw - not feeding ravens, not being a draw for raccoons, things like that.

Beyond that, as far as predator control issues, that goes into APHIS, and working with the Division of Wildlife Resources, which currently does work with the counties in implementing predator control issues. So this document is

sparse on that, it's not a reflection of the status of predation as a threat in Utah, it's just a reflection of the jurisdictions that we have.

In the Draft EIS, it's structured like every EIS, with chapters.

Chapter 1 is the introduction. It presents the purpose and need and presenting the issues.

Chapter 2 presents a range of alternatives. In essence, different alignments of decisions looking to resolve the issues that were raised.

Chapter 3 addresses the existing environment. It presents the existing environment on sage grouse, as well as the existing environment on the various other resources that could be affected by those decisions.

Chapter 4 looks at the impact analysis. What are the impacts of those decisions on that environment?

And Chapter 5 is a summary of coordination issues to date. Not issues, but coordination consistency efforts in relation to county and to Fish and Wildlife Service, et cetera.

In Chapter 2, there are two types of decisions that we're making in this effort, one is a spatial decision, one is the - more of the types of management that would occur in those areas.

So you have, "What areas are needed to - as far as prioritization?" We use different terminology, I'll use - in essence it's a two-tier prioritization. Take all the habitat and separate them into two categories, whether it's an SGMA, non-SGMA, whether it's a core, non-core for Wyoming, whether it's priority or general, the concept is that there are two tiers, all the occupied habitat land in one of two tiers. Those two tiers have a prioritization as to how the management of Sage-Grouse would occur in those areas.

The second type of decision is obviously, "What is that management in those two areas?" So we can look at the areas here in a second, but the - we consider what management actions may be needed to achieve desired outcomes, specifically things like goals, objectives, desired future conditions.

And then the second one is, "In order to meet those desired outcomes, what are the allowable, prohibited or restricted actions that need to take place based on use of public lands in those areas in order to protect Sage-Grouse."

Obviously we're looking at, and as with any alternative or with any EIS, we need to look at a full range of alternatives that we can legally implement.

The first type of decision that I want to address is the Sage-Grouse in these management areas. We have priority again that two-tier system is what I want to focus on.

I already addressed this with the previous discussion, so in essence, priority or SGMA or core all equal the area where we are looking to do more specific management versus non-core, non-SGMA or general is the other. Go ahead to the next slide.

This is the chart identifying the acreage. I mentioned earlier that 3.3 million acres of surface estate. Our decisions only apply to those areas of surface estate where we have that jurisdiction. What this looks at is how that breaks out into, and the terminology will be in here as priority and general, so preliminary priority management areas, and preliminary general areas-management areas.

If I refer to acronyms that I haven't identified, let me know because there are a lot of those in this process. GRSG is Greater Sage-Grouse.

The last one on this slide that we need to define is PAC. PACs are Priority Areas of Conservation. Last May, the FWS came out with the report from a group they identified. It's the COT Report, Conservation Objectives Team Report.

They worked with individuals from each of the states in the range of Sage-Grouse, they identified a series of conservation measures and identified areas, priority areas for conservation. In Utah, PACs are synonymous with our SGMAs that the State identified in their plan. That's just another piece of measure that both from the state side and from the Service side. We're trying to track how everything matches up with that.

What you're looking at here is across the range of alternatives, and A is not on here because A is not an alternative with areas of prioritization for Sage-Grouse. There are some management actions, but none of these two-tier systems.

What I want to use as a take home here is beyond these acreages. Every alternative looks at protecting at least 82% of the habitat in the state. Compare this to Wyoming ...

Wyoming looks at it with their core strategy that their governor, and I'm just using this as a basis of comparison. Wyoming looked approximately 80% of the birds and about 25% of the habitat. A little more than 80% of the birds, the

middle 80's. By comparison in this range of alternatives, we're looking at 80% of the habitat with no less than 97% of the birds being identified.

As you look at the maps and in Volume 2, there's a CD that has all the maps in it. Basically the areas where we're looking to focus our prioritization on management is where the birds are. It just happens that in Utah we have a few areas that are very, very sparsely populated for a variety of reasons.

As far as Alternative B, D and E go, the emphasis is looking to protect those areas through priorities, that upper tier of polygons, in relation to where the biggest bang for the buck is, basically. In Alternative C, we're looking at 100% of the habitat would be managed for Sage-Grouse conservation throughout the State of Utah.

I do also want to clarify this number is based on breeding males, from on lek attendance monitoring. There are extrapolations that through general distribution of the species, you can come up with actual population, but that's based on the breeding populations, breeding males, which the DWR monitors on an annual basis.

The previous slide is more of an issue of, "How much of the population do our circles capture?" The bigger issue comes down to, "What is the management within those different circles?" That's where the biggest variation comes.

When you look at the previous slide, there's not a whole lot of variability, even as you look at the maps. The difference between Alternative D, which is the agency preferred alternative right now and Alternative E, which is based on State's plan, there's 95% of the priority or general in agreement. Areas the State had outside SGMAs, the BLM shows as general.

There's about 5% of the habitat in the State where there's a difference. One way - and it goes both directions. What the State says is outside, the BLM says it's inside, and vice versa.

The bigger issue becomes variance in the alternative in how those areas are managed. That's what we're going to spend probably about the next six or seven slides on.

The range of alternatives is set up here, thusly we're looking at - and I'll point this out here, we actually have a slide dealing with livestock grazing a little further. I want to defer any discussion till we have a bit more detail on the slide.

But basically alternatives, we have in essence, five alternatives but there are two sub-alternatives. I think I've addressed this - the alternative range, with

you guys in our last meeting. Basically, Alternative B is based on recommendations from the National Technical Team Report identified and released by the BLM in the WO IM 2012-044.

Alternative C was developed from input during scoping. We had identified, by several commenters, additional measures that they wanted us to consider in relation to conservation of Sage-Grouse. We didn't want to have two separate alternatives in relation to one of the issues, and that was livestock grazing. We wanted to make sure we explored the effects of what's a no grazing alternative and a substantially - a substantial reduction in grazing.

So we have only one, Alternative C until you hit livestock grazing, and then there's a C1, C2. And then it goes back to being just a C.

Alternative D is one that the BLM and the Forest Service, in working with the FWS, had identified a variety of measures looking at some of the specificities from the specific issues here in Utah. Also making sure that there was, in this range of alternatives, adequate exploration of the various levels of management that we could consider.

Alternative E is another one that we split into two pieces, because we overlap pieces of Wyoming. Our planning area extends portions of the Ashley and Uintah/Wasatch/Cache that extend into Wyoming. They had asked that we consider managing those areas as a forest unit, rather than splitting it at the state line.

Alternative E2 is based on the Wyoming Governor's Executive Orders from up there, and Alternative E1 is based on the Utah Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah.

The other aspect here is this one always lends itself to copious amounts of discussion. Yes.

Bill H: Really rubs me the wrong way, you called C, citizen-generated alternative. That opinion represents probably half of 1% of the population.

Quincy: Yes.

Bill H: And people who read this document are going to say Utah citizens came up with these comments, they must reflect Utah's opinion. That's simply not true. I guess I would recommend finding another name for Alternative C that defines where it came from.

Quincy: It could equally be said that the Governor's Working Group came up with this, and it's based on citizen input as well.

Bill H: At least they're representatives of a broader population density.

Quincy: That's an excellent comment. I would say, "How we refer to them often carries great weight." You're right. That carries some weight that isn't intended. That's not what the intent was as far as we described it that way.

Man: So what can you call it instead?

Bill H: I don't think you'd want to hear what I'd say. They'd arrest me!

Quincy: Often times there is, in a full revision, a full RMP revision in the BLM, when everything is on the table, you end up with things like the Conservation Alternative, the Development Alternative.

We didn't want to use those terminologies, because in this instance, every alternative is a conservation alternative from where we are right now in relation to Sage-Grouse.

Let me think on that one. There's some terminology I'm sure we could come up with, but in the end it's why we avoided labeling them. It's why we ended up with this Alternative C or Alternative D. That was merely an attempt of trying to describe how it came about.

The disturbance cap relates to the first of the decisions that I want to get to. Sage-Grouse research has shown Sage-Grouse are sensitive to the disturbances on landscape. Various research over the past three years started to look at, "How much before you start to see some decline in the birds?"

Previous research has looked at how far in relation to, especially mineral development, density of mineral development before you start seeing an effect on the birds.

What this disturbance cap attempts to look at initially is things, based on a couple of pieces of literature and copious amounts in Wyoming in relation to Powder River Basin and Southwestern Wyoming: "What is the threshold where we start to see reduction in Sage-Grouse populations?"

What we've identified is there are two key pieces of literature out there, one of them is looking at about 3%, one of them is looking at - well the NTT was looking at - not the NTT, the State of Wyoming was looking at 5% initially, based on some - a 1 per 640, which averages out to be about 5% when we're looking at mineral development.

Supporting that is a piece of literature that looks at between 4% and 6% you start to see some effect to brood success, and at about 6% to 8% brood success drops substantially.

Man: When you're talking about surface disturbance, define what it includes.

Quincy: That is where the crux comes with it. . It varies both by percentage as well as by definition. Now the B and D use a similar definition, however it is unsatisfactorily vague for most folks.

It includes things - discrete anthropogenic disturbances. And the examples it gives are oil pads, pipelines, transmission lines, constructed roads. That's the language out of the NTT Report. In essence, the footprint of what is disturbed, that you can see it on the landscape.

Alternative C identified that we were asked to include within that fire, that they used the term, "severely burned areas," without providing a definition. We have it in essence, that fire is included in the disturbance cap as part of that.

The question usually arises, "Are farmer's field disturbance? Are vegetation treatments disturbance?" In general, we've said under B and D, "Vegetation treatments performed for enhancement of habitat would not be considered disturbance."

What we have specifically avoided doing is going through an exhaustive list of everything that is in or out in terms of disturbance. We've identified some of those general things that are kind of the obvious, and then we've left the discretion there. This is where that flexibility versus certainty issue comes in.

We left it on the discretion to the local managers that when a project is proposed, they have the direction to avoid disturbance. And it's up to that NEPA document to identify whether that would be considered a disturbance or not based on the local conditions.

One of the other aspects that Alternative C identified was tied to grazing, but it was heavily grazed areas. Heavily grazed areas, again, without defining what heavily grazed meant. We identified that as a term of utilization, which the BLM strives not to do heavily utilizations, above 60% utilization. So it wasn't an issue as far as the analysis goes.

But the other aspect that does come in under Alternative C, is they include any treatment that reduces sagebrush would be identified as a disturbance as well. So sagebrush thinning and chaining would be identified as a disturbance under Alternative C.

Alternative E and D...E1 and E2, both include fire. I will caveat that with, in the version of the plan that was passed in May, the State plan included fire as a disturbance. My understanding is that that is in the process of, if not already - we haven't been provided with an updated plan, but it's my understanding that that is in the process of being changed based on the input of the counties.

Yes, I will say, "the Service likes very much that fire is included as a disturbance cap." They don't see a lot of difference in relation to the habitat dying of an area that's been burned versus that has been bladed for a well pad.

Man: So who started that?

Quincy: The Fish and Wildlife Service.

Man: Yes. When they talk about fire, do they differentiate at what elevation.

Quincy: Yes that's why we, in Alternative D, did not include fire, because all fires are not created equal. There are very good fires for Sage-Grouse. Going through juniper, going through areas, you know, small scale areas like that, you can do things to improve Sage-Grouse habitat. That's where we felt, as far as just lumping fire in a disturbance, didn't count there.

I will say that that discussion is ongoing and I'm sure we will get many comments from the public in relation to how - whether elevationally, whether size, whatever, that we consider fire in relation to a disturbance cap or not, as the case may be.

Bill H: In Alternative C, if you removed old Sage-Grouse brush that is not producing decent nutrition as part of a rehabilitation, does that still count as disturbance?

Quincy: Under Alternative C, if it reduces sagebrush, it would count as disturbance. The decadent sage reduction, the concern there that it is often winter habitat. That is how that issue is resolved with Alternative C.

With Alternatives D and E, it's solved by - before you go into a decadent area, make sure that you've done an analysis to analyze the effects on winter habitat and whether or not that area provides sufficient winter habitat. The State actually has language to never treat more than 20% of that decadent sage to make sure there's lots of sufficient winter habitat present.

Man: Thanks. I have a couple.

Quincy: In the end, it's, what is disturbance, how it's measured, things like that. We have, at this point, established a skeletal framework intentionally leaving

some areas vague, and making sure that - I'll use Wyoming again as an example.

Wyoming in their Executive Order established the 5% cap. The first one was 2003, so ten years, we're ten years in, and they're working on their disturbance density calculation tool, DDCT.

It's about 200 – the disturbance calculation manual is about 200 pages about how to go about implementing and measuring and doing that disturbance calculation and implementing that threshold tool.

So what we didn't want to do is we didn't want to put all that specific - very specific decision in the RMP to where if we ever wanted to make a change we'd have to do another amendment.

We wanted to set up the framework with enough bones to be able to hold it, but leaving some of the specificity to the implementation. Again, providing the direction to how, as far as the specificity, of exactly what it would do and how it would be done would be left to be determined during implementation.

Any other questions on this? And I'm sure we could go for a long time on this, and this is usually where we get hung up for about an hour with the counties. So there's a lot of concern in relation to making sure, you know, this could do a lot depending on how it's implemented.

Juan: Quincy maybe just to emphasize it, as far as we, the BLM, we are recommending Alternative D right now on the graph and that we have the 5% cap, with fire excluded at this point. And it sounds like the State is also coming to some - maybe we get alignment. Earlier I spoke to - we're trying to find alignment, and this is where I'm curious.

I believe that commissioners at - Utah Association of Counties basically proposed a combination of D and E.

Quincy: Okay.

Man: That fire was one of the big issues.

Quincy: The other aspect of this that's different between D and E is existing versus new disturbance. Under Alternative E, the existing disturbance on the landscape is not counted towards that cap. Under D, existing disturbances would be included in that cap. So that's one of the primary differences that I could see reconciling or fixing and matching as we go forward.

Man: I wasn't even clear on what part of what that that was the parts of D, parts of E and A, not clear in my own mind

Quincy: The attempt here is to summarize what is in the alternatives. Undoubtedly anytime you attempt to summarize a 100-page table, you lose some of the specificity. I will say, "The devil is in the details." And what this attempts to do is provide some general direction.

Page 2-158, Table 2.3 has a lot of acreages. This includes some narrative, but Table 2.3 includes some of the generic acreages available across the different alternatives.

I do want to go into some more detail in describing what is in these alternatives and what makes them different. I think there's going to be quite a bit of discussion as far as looking to explore, "Were certain things considered?" "Why weren't other things considered in that range?" I do want to make sure we give that adequate time. I think that's going to result in quite a bit of discussion.

So I'm not skipping this, I want to come back to it. So we have range - fire and vegetation, range, land and realty, minerals and then some additional management actions related to travel, ACECs or horses.

In the range of alternatives, the BLM is required to identify a preferred. We're required by regulation - NEPA doesn't but our regulations require us to identify a preferred alternative.

Under CEQ's 40 most asked questions, they identify or they define the preferred as, "The alternative which the agency believes to fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental and technical and other factors." That's how CEQ defines the preferred alternative.

Alternative D is the preferred in the Draft EIS, however, legally there's nothing that holds to that going forward. As we move into the proposed plan development in the final EIS, we can mix and match between any alternative. And when I say, "Mix and match," it's not just a matter of choosing B, C, D, we can pick a decision from range in D, and a decision in range from E, and put them both in the proposed plan.

As we seek the public comment on the alternatives and on the impact analysis, that will help inform the next step, which is identifying a brand new alternative, which will be the proposed plan. In the final EIS, there will be an entirely new alternative. We see some changes already.

We've gotten a comment in one of our meetings in relation to something we may have to tweak in Alternative D, which at that point in the final I guess will no longer be the preferred, it will just be Alternative D, to make sure that we're considering everything, that we've considered that full range of alternatives that we can look at.

This next piece that I can't underestimate the importance of. I will tell you I've worked on 13 land management revisions, before these 20 throughout the West. Looking at RMP revisions, usually public comments focus on Chapter 2. Most folks say, "We want this piece of this alternative, we want that alternative-vote kinds of comments.

The thing that is often overlooked is that the BLM and the Forest Service, when making a decision, need to avoid being arbitrary. We need to have a reason for why we made that decision. The impact analysis describes the impacts from implementing the various alternatives. Often what we will see in our comments is, "Select this alternative because it does X, Y, Z."

The problem is when you go to Chapter 4 and you look at the impacts, that doesn't agree with the comment. It's important to marry those two. The problem is that Chapter 4 is usually big and extremely dense to get through.

Chapter 4 describes the impact from the actions to the existing environment. It does so using a variety of, need for terminology, direct-indirect impacts. Things that happen directly to the birds versus in fragmentation.

We refer commonly to the functional loss of habitat. Loss of habitat occurs where the well pad goes down. Functional loss occurs if you have development at a certain density; research has shown that the birds will abandon that area. While you still have sage brush throughout the middle of all that area, the birds have stopped using it because they're sensitive to where the noise and frequency of maintenance actions on those areas are. You have an indirect effect to that other habitat. We refer to it in those two terms.

We also address how the environment would change.

We're looking at not just impacts to the bird, but also impacts to other aspects of the human environment. Again NEPA's looking at the entire environment of mankind, including social and economic aspects as well. We look at impacts of these alternatives on cultural resources, although it's a very short section. Impacts on livestock grazing as an industry, and as such economically, both economically and socially, et cetera. So the impact analysis seeks to describe those impacts.

Over this past year, I was bouncing around in a truck in Box Elder County with LuAnn Adams and talking about a No Grazing alternative. You have to consider a No Grazing alternative. Based on court cases, based on what is within our jurisdiction based on issues raised, you know unless we want to risk losing on process, we need to consider a No Grazing alternative because it resolves an issue and it is something that we can do. That's up for debate but it's something that the agency feels that is within our purview.

We also describe the impacts from that No Grazing alternative; both the impact related to social and economic, as well as the impact from related to fire, and fine fuels reduction, impacts related to maintenance of various fence lines and well ponds and things like that, trying to look at the holistic picture.

So we have the alternative, the question is, "What is the impact of the alternative?" That discussion of the impact analysis, the environmental consequences, will help in that decision making process. If there are certain resources which you're interested in, I'd recommend diving into Chapter 4.

We tried to structure it so you can find those connections, as far as the impacts to livestock grazing, impacts to minerals, flipping that and saying, "Impacts to Sage-Grouse from minerals, from livestock grazing." You can look at it from both directions to see how that balances, being assessed in this document.

Cumulative; I didn't hit on cumulative. Cumulative is the other aspect that's not mentioned here. We look at cumulative effects as well. Cumulative effects are where predation, hunting, those other aspects that are outside our purview come in. We have a list of reasonably foreseeable future actions, anywhere from vegetation - from implementation of vegetation products, Juniper reduction, mineral development, road, pipeline, and power lines. We have three proposed power lines currently working toward permitting. We take a look at those that are not specifically being made in our decision process. We look at things that either we don't have that purview in control, the jurisdiction over, the projects that are still coming down the pike, and how that could potentially affect both Sage-Grouse and how Sage-Grouse management likewise affect it. The decisions we'd be making here could affect those other resources on a broader scale.

For example, if you take Alternative D and the NSO, the No Surface Occupancy, that's looking to be put into place under Alternative D for Sage-Grouse, how does that when taken into balance, of all the potential NSO related to WSAs and related to wilderness characteristics areas, natural areas related to ACEDs related to other restrictions...when taken into concert with all those other decisions that may not be in Sage-Grouse habitat, "What is the cumulative effect to the oil and gas industry?"

It's not just looking at our little piece of the puzzle, but the broader piece, both in Utah as well as in some of the adjacent areas where you have some overlap of similar resources.

The public comment process--this is something that I'm sure all of you are aware of. It runs through January 29 and it's a 90-day public comment period. Things that are not received or postmarked by the 29th will be received and read, but they go into a different category legally, as far as what we have to do with those comments. We're looking at receiving those comments by the 29th. We had about 1300 form letters that have been mailed into us via email. We received about 20 unique letters. However yesterday, every time we hit update, our number of letters/emails is bumping up by about 150.

I will say, "Those are not votes. We don't count votes; we count substantive issues."

JR: Thank you, I was ready to point out that if you get a form letter that's one comment.

Quincy: Correct

JR: Even if there's 5000, that's one comment?

Quincy: Correct. We are looking at issues on the Draft EIS. That's what the public comment process looks to do. It raises issues, alternatives that we have or have not considered, and whether it's been raised 1000 times or one, that still has legal standing in the same - in the eyes of the court.

I know we're going to receive more comments. I know to-date we've received two county comments, one of them is kind of interim. We're going to receive more from them. We've received most of our comments in the last week.

JR: It was personal. Did you get Emery's? I know they're working on them.

Quincy: No I don't. I received Sevier's and Garfield's. Garfield, I'm sure is just a step in the process.

Man: And by the way, one of the guys who is working on our comment, "Called him the Sage-Grouse God."

Man: Related to comments, can you explain what kind of weight you put on comments? If it's from a county versus an individual in New York versus an environmental group?

Quincy: When we plug it into the database, we document who it came from for issues of standing and for protest and things like that. When we go into responses, I like to keep the name handy to look at because sometimes when you read it and you're trying to figure out what on earth they're talking about, knowing where it came from can help define some of that information. But as far as weight, there is no difference.

The difference comes in level specificity. Someone from New York will usually know far less about Parker Mountain and the fact that grazing has continued on there for years and the Sage-Grouse population is doing awesome down there, and as a result, it doesn't seem like grazing is impacting Grouse there versus someone from New York saying something different without all that background information.

Because the locals have more information, we often ask them, "Put that information into your comment." That's what gives us as an agency added ability to take that into account.

In the end, we don't stratify based on how far you are from the planning area, it's based on what you have to add to the planning process.

Bill H: So how about difference in comments from a place like Box Elder or Rich County who have two of the main core areas versus San Juan?

Quincy: It would be similar, as long as the content, not location.

JR: They're not the same birds.

Quincy: No.

JR: San Juan is Gunnison Sage-Grouse.

Quincy: Yes. Any comments on the Gunnison process is out of scope. It's not applicable here.

Bill H: I guess my point was is that, you know, you have several counties that this decision is going to have huge impact on.

Quincy: Yes.

Bill H: and yet their voice is no stronger than when those who are less affected.

Quincy: Take Box Elder County for example. When you head out to Grouse Creek and the ranches out there, if you remove public land grazing from the equation, the economic ability of those specific towns is in question. Now the

county as a whole, it may not be an effect, but those areas out there, there's a much bigger effect on those areas. Whether they can continue just the private ground and be economical, that becomes an impact analysis issue.

Rather than saying, "Don't close it to grazing because it's going to be bad for our county, "Your impact analysis says X, Y, Z. We feel this underestimates or adequately describes," or whatever, "the effects on this area. The decision maker should take into account the economic effect of..."

Duchesne County has been excellent at providing us information related to how the oil and gas industry has grown over the past three years, compared to when we took that snapshot of data, providing local data that they have more - some more expertise in and saying, "You need to make sure you put into context the bigger picture with some more specific data that we have knowledge of at this local level."

That goes into a decision-making process. That doesn't weigh one way or another, but it definitely gives a decision maker something to consider when coming up with which alternative to go forward as the proposed.

The other aspect is the difference between state and county. Legally, not through NEPA, but through FLPMA, those entities, other federal agencies, tribes, states and county governments, do have an additional piece of standing. I don't know if standing's the right term, but there was an additional "umph" tied to Sections 202 of FLPMA, 202 C9. I believe it is tied to consistency of - that the federal government, the BLM RMPs should be consistent to the extent practical, and as much as possible with those plans and the other purposes of this law being FLPMA.

There is in that aspect, in coming up with the final decision, an emphasis on local plans, on state plans, and on other federal agencies (Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service). It's often raised, "What are you going to do when..." and we have this example forming right now, "...when a county plan is not consistent with a state plan, which is not consistent with potentially how you interpret it, the COT report?"

In the end, we have to be consistent with multiple plans that are not consistent with themselves. That's going to be part of the joy in this - coming up with that proposed plan and trying to find that balance. But those comments, from those entities tied to FLPMA, do end up adding a little bit more weight to FLPMA, not to NEPA. It's all tied to the decision-making process in the end, but different legal authorities.

Bill H: The reality is not true. Final decision is going to be made by a judge.

Quincy: The final decision would be signed by Juan.

Bill H: That will be appealed.

Quincy: What happens at that point is out of my hands, and out of his hands as well.

Quincy: Yes, it would not surprise me if the decision, regardless of direction, were litigated by one party or another. Is that a soft enough answer?

Lowell: This may be something you're reluctant to answer, "How much - as you're making these - as you're going through this, how often do you guys think of what you do in terms of litigation management?"

Quincy: It's all about risk management. A child growing up only has to be punished so many times before they learn not to do that behavior. The BLM can lose so many lawsuits before we learn how to make sure we don't lose lawsuits. When you lose lawsuits you can do what - you can't manage public land because it - depending on the remedies.

It's definitely something taken into account. It's why we are so focused on process. Nine times out of ten, we lose on process, not on the decision we make.

Roan Plateau is a great example. The judge didn't have a problem with the Roan Plateau over in Colorado. They didn't have a problem with the decision itself, but they failed to consider a consensus, citizen-proposed alternative in the Draft EIS and that's what threw it back. They had to open it back up to look at that alternative.

It was a process issue, it wasn't a decision issue. That's where we're very sensitive to making sure we're following process. There are a lot of regulations that we have to follow to make sure that we've considered everything and then make sure that it withstands legal challenge on the process aspect.

Lowell: Does that mean you'll look at process questions that are raised in terms of the COT report for the technical team basis for making those decisions?

Quincy: Where the alternative comes from and how it was developed is less important than that we consider it in the range of alternatives. You could do the same thing on saying, "Let's not consider the NTT because it was developed X, Y, Z," you could do the same thing with Alternative C.

"Don't consider components of Alternative C because they were provided, not by a broad base of the public, but by a very small segment." NEPA's less

concerned with how the alternative was developed and more concerned with, "Does it address the issue being raised, and does it address the purpose and need and the issues associated with that?"

Man: But U.S. Fish and Wildlife rely on best available science.

Quincy: Correct.

Man: If there are holes in those concepts in those two reports that I cited, how do you deal with those in the EIS process?

Quincy: NEPA is specific that if there is competing science that has different results, we are to report the results of both; that we don't pick and choose, we don't cherry-pick our science.

Obviously there is more weight given to peer-reviewed articles over anecdotal. There was a kind of a hierarchy that CEQ is establishing on peer reviews and gone down to the non-peer like a thesis, down to staff expertise, down to anecdotal -- all of that's in there, but there's a hierarchy in how that's weighted.

Man: That's helpful, thank you.

Quincy: The last one is merely the process coming forward.

January 29 is when we close the public process period. We then evaluate and read every comment, respond to any substantive comment that'll go into the document, make any adjustment to the analysis or the alternatives developed, identify and develop a proposed plan and issue a final EIS that includes all those responses, the new proposed plan, and the analysis of that. The anticipation at this point is June 2014.

The problem with this process is, as we started, since December 2011 when we issued our NOI, we've always wiggled here and there as we've gone through various reviews and alternative development, et cetera. The problem is this end date has never shifted, and so the time to complete what's remaining becomes more and more compressed.

We have going forward from here, the final EIS. Part of the final EIS is a 30-day protest process, associated with that. Concurrent with that, for the first 30 days is a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. Then we develop, as coordinating out of that Governor's Consistency Review, the Record of Decision with the proposed decision itself. That needs to be issued by September 2014.

The critical piece of that date is that the Service has to be done with their final up or down listing by the end of 2015 and there is a 12-month evaluation process. In order for us to address those issues that they had raised in 2010, we need to have our documents ready for them to evaluate at the start of that 12-month process.

It's an ambitious schedule to say the least. The intent is to make the documents and the decision-making process better through input from the public and comments from the RAC.

Man: Question Quincy, back to the science, "If someone has done a peer on peer review, if someone has performed a study for industry or someone else or some environment group, what does FLPMA and NEPA say about that, and then compensate for it?"

Quincy: Yes.

Man: How is that all interpreted?

Quincy: NEPA doesn't address the source of data in the regulations from CEQ, that I'm aware of. It doesn't address, basically, where the science came from. I will say both Renee and I read scientific reports with a very critical eye of applicability. Renee is our Sage-Grouse biologist. She would be the Sage-Grouse goddess.

It is, "How large is the sample size, was the area looked at equivalent with what the area we're looking at here?" Often the question has been raised in Utah. Most of the science comes out of Wyoming. Oftentimes we hear, "Utah's different than Wyoming." I've said that several times. Utah is different; we don't have those huge rolling prairies.

That being said, we have to use the best available science and simply saying, "It's not applicable because it's different," the comment is usually coming back as, "Well then give me something else." Because that's the best available science.

We can look at it in terms of the adequacy of the science. We can call into question, whether or not it's applicable because of its adequacy. To dismiss it because it was paid for by a mineral company, that's not sufficient justification to dismiss it.

Man: Thank you.

Quincy: We've done that regularly. There's lots of pieces of literature that are not necessarily empirical science, but merely a review and then an opinion. It's

why we need to take a look at those pieces of science. That's why when folks present stuff to the BLM during a process, it's nice to have those articles, rather than simply citing it and sending it in.

Man: The comment you made earlier was on the Parker Mountain, you know there's been grazing for years.

Quincy: Correct.

Man: Has anybody documented all that? That's part of the science.

Quincy: Correct. If you look in Chapter 4, it cites a variety of scientific articles in relation to impacts to grouse from livestock grazing. Those articles are both positive and negative effects. It also looks at empirical data in areas. There's 1, 2, 3, 4 areas of the state, Box Elder, Rich, Parker and Diamond Mountain where the major land use almost the sole land use, is livestock grazing.

Quincy: In those areas, the grass populations are doing well. We won't ignore monitoring information like that to simply then turn around and say, "Therefore grazing is good for cows in all instances, in all conditions."

When we get to the grazing discussion later, the issue that the Service raised was not with grazing in and of itself. It was with improper livestock grazing. That becomes the issue that the EIS is seeking to ameliorate--is improper livestock grazing. The problem becomes what is proper varies greatly by where you're grazing, what kind you're grazing, when you're grazing -- there's a variety of factors that then go into account in what is proper versus improper. When we get to that we can dive into some more detail in relation to how we looked at that.

Man: I think you got a comment on the Division of Wildlife Resources' take on Sage-Grouse, too, and Carl knows as well as I do that they think there are enough birds down there to hunt. So that you know, "That's a positive thing, they're doing really well. If we don't hunt them and control them, you know.

Quincy: Correct. Okay, that's my time.

Lowell: Yes. I wanted to thank you in the interim Quincy. It's been like drinking from a fire hose, but it's been a good presentation and we'll get back with you.

Quincy: Okay.

Lowell: This is the time set aside on our agenda for public comment. I think we have three issues that are paramount in public comment for today. There are the

three campground fee presentations. I would encourage public comment to deal with those three campground fee presentations and let's try to get those out of the way in the time that we have allotted. The remainder of that public comment time can be devoted to other issues.

But having said that, is there somebody in the room that would like to begin the public comment period?

Kitty Benzar: I'd like to speak.

Man: Please do.

Kitty: Not to any of those.

Man: Well...

Kitty: I'll let anybody who has a comment about those to go ahead.

Lowell: All right. Is there anybody else in the room that wants to speak to the three campground proposals? Hearing none. Do we have people on the telephone that would like to speak to the three campground proposals?

Hearing none, I think what the RAC should do then is recognize that, and perhaps at the conclusion the public comment period, the RAC needs to make their recommendations as to how to proceed on those fee proposals. Comments from the RAC on that suggestion?

Man: Sounds good.

Lowell: Okay, would you proceed please? Identify yourself and glad to have you here.

Kitty: I have something completely different I promise.

Kitty Benzar: Hi, yes my name is Kitty Benzar. I think you all know me as the disembodied voice on the telephone from a few of your meetings where I have participated by teleconference. I wanted to talk a little bit about the RAC process, the RecRAC process in general, rather than any particular proposals that might be before you today.

I've been involved with fees on public land since fee demo started in 1996. I was involved in the legislation that replaced it, FLREA, that we are living with now. I hope some of you have it already, if this is redundant, I apologize. But the RecRACs were put in FLREA specifically in response to complaints under fee demo that the agencies had vastly exceeded any reasonable fee

authority. They were charging entrance fees for entire national forests, entire huge chunks of BLM land.

The public had no way of giving any input on that and no way of participating in those decisions. Congress had heard that loud and clear and when they wrote FLREA and replaced fee demo with FLREA they put in this RecRAC process. I don't know if you've read the law. I hope, God I hope you've read the law. But there's more words devoted in that law to public participation than to any other topic, and it was all supposed to be through this RecRAC process.

So it's a FACA process. Under FACA, the agencies appoint the members of the RecRACs and they decided what the RecRACs would be and how they would work. So some of them were chartered under the Forest Service, five of them were chartered under Forest Service, so you know that process in the Forest Service has essentially broken down.

There's not a Forest Service Recreational Resource Advisory Committee that can currently muster a quorum, they can't get applications for their vacancies.

The BLM, in the places where the Forest Service didn't take over the responsibility the BLM gave that to the existing Resource Advisory Council, and that would be you.

The Advisory Council thing kind of got started for a whole different reason. I think as I understand it. It got started to try to get ranchers and environmentalists and mining interests and biologists to all talk to each other, try to see things from each other's point of view, and try to reach consensus on things that had been adversarial for a long time before that and nobody was getting anywhere. So you're Advisory to the BLM.

Under the FLREA, the RecRACs have a little different role, you have a statutory role. The law specifically says one of your responsibilities before you forward a recommendation to approve a proposal, you are supposed to document that there is general public support.

I don't want to pick on just you because this has been the case pretty much in all but a handful of cases across the country. The RecRACs have approved almost everything that has ever been put before them. There's never been a - well I have the data for Utah. We keep a, what I call a Box Score, it's on our Web site, if you want to pass those around.

Man:

Thank you.

Kitty: That's your report card. The Utah RecRAC first met to talk about approval or not approving, a fee proposal in 2007. Today is the most recent example. There have been several in the meantime. In that all that time, you've approved 53 fee increases, 16 new fees, and you have never declined anything -- anything.

So one thing - rather than just talk, it's not so much I want to impart information to you today, I honestly do have a question for you. I wonder if any of you can tell me how you evaluate general public support, and what you would have to see in order to vote No on anything? Can anybody give me an answer to that?

Lowell: I think we, this is Lowell Braxton, I think we've seen a lot of documentation, the type of public input that's gone into the campground fee proposals. I'm not sure as a RAC we're charged with doing more than just looking at that input and seeing what sort of diversity is there.

We certainly afford opportunities, such as we afforded this morning for the public to come in and speak. They have not come in and spoken on those issues. I think the opportunity has been there. I think had people come in and they addressed your main comments to the information that we'd been given, we would have given it very serious consideration.

That's speaking for myself. I can't speak for other RAC members. You threw that out as a general question. That's my personal opinion.

Kitty: Yes.

Kitty: I would like to hear from some others too, but it just - my first response to that is, "It's - what is it, it's Friday morning? It's the middle of the day, you know, a lot of people are working, Number 1; Number 2, all of the people who submitted comments to the local field offices or the local ranger district, they don't - I don't think they should have to come in person, again if they've submitted that.

There have been numerous examples of proposals where the general public opposition to what is proposed has been very well documented. One example is the San Juan River proposal the Monticello office did a couple of meetings ago. It was right there in their business plan, "There's general public opposition."

The letters that they got in opposition tended to be very substantive, very thoughtful, they had read the proposal. The few letters that they got in support were superficial, they were one sentence. Some of them we could document

had been solicited by the BLM managers to try to get something positive come in because they weren't getting anything.

I don't see a functional process here. Anybody else have an answer for me?

Steve Burr: This is Steve Burr. I'm trying to remember back to the San Juan proposal. Aaron, you may remember this better.

Kitty: That's just an example, I don't want to start getting into the details of each example.

Aaron: Yes, my recollection of that is that that was an issue that was larger than the fee proposals related to the business plan and...

Aaron: ...something to do...

Man: ...WSAs and...

Man: Park Services as well.

Steve Burr: Park Service and the Navajo Nation. But as I remember, what the BLM presented to us was not negative reaction. I'd have to go back and look at my notes.

But you know Kitty, to say one other thing, I mean and I'm relatively new to the RAC and serving as the Recreation RAC Coordinator. One thing that I keep in the back of my mind with respect to these business plans and these proposals, would be fee increases that would lock out recreationists that wouldn't be able to afford that. And I haven't seen that up to this point.

But you know, if a case comes up where there might be low income groups that are recreating a particular place and they might be shut out from recreational opportunities because of an increase in fees that would not allow them to participate or couldn't afford it, then I would not support feeing.

Kitty: That was the case with the San Juan proposal. One of the very substantive comments that was received was from a nonprofit group that takes low income and disadvantaged Navajo children on river trips to introduce them to that experience. They wrote a letter in opposition to the fee increase because it was going to reduce their ability to provide that opportunity to that population.

Steve Burr: I'd have to check that because I do not remember.

Kitty: Well see, this is the problem. The presentation you got presented a superficial, misleading and incomplete summary of the comments that the

Monticello Office had received. We brought that to your attention in the teleconference; myself and Norm Henderson. Norm can't be here today, but he is a retired river manager for the National Park Service.

He understands these issues and the legalities of them far better than I do frankly. He brought some of that to your attention, I brought some of that to your attention. Do I have to bring you the broomstick of the wicked witch of the West? Is there ever a case where we could get you to look more closely at some of the information that you're given that tends to be superficial and self-serving.

Bill Hopkin: So yes, Bill Hopkin. There are notices that this is going to be part of the discussion. What would be the problem sharing with people sending stuff?

I'm getting the impression from what you're saying that any opposition goes to the Forest Service and the BLM, or whoever is making the proposal, and then it gets kind of slid under the rug to the RAC. Is there a reason why people who are opposed to it can't send that directly to the RAC?

Kitty: I believe in the past, when we have sent things directly to the RAC, certain members have asked us not to do that. They thought that was an intrusion on their email inbox or something.

Kitty: We've been asked not to do that by certain individuals.

Lowell: Let me comment on that, this is Lowell Braxton. I probably responded in an email saying, "Don't send that material to us because it's not an official position before the RAC." But I would encourage people to send those comments to the BLM or the Forest Service when we're doing these fee proposals. I would also encourage the Forest Service or BLM, whichever agency is correct, to recognize those comments in there.

When we deal with any of these administrative agencies, I think we have to recognize that what we're saying as an individual may not apply to the population at large. But I think we need to cherish the opportunity to make those comments.

If there's a way that we can get those comments incorporated into the decisions that are brought before the RAC, and then have them articulated when they come before the RAC, I'm all for it.

That's what this public comment is about. I think just because somebody objects, doesn't necessarily mean the RAC has to buy that. I'm going to object on the Sage-Grouse, and I hope they buy it, but they probably won't so I think that's just the way the process works.

I think you would have another administrative opportunity, and that is if you feel that legally the process is broken, I would search out a way to get your wants incorporated into the process in a manner that they currently aren't incorporated in. Again, people may not accept that proposal from you but - and maybe this is what you're trying to do right now, is search out those avenues.

Kitty: Are you saying we should sue? I don't hear a lot of support for litigation in this group.

Lowell: No, I'm not suggesting that at all. Although that's always an option. You know, you can always roll out your checkbook and do it but...

Kitty: There is litigation history on this issue, but it's not with the BLM it's with the Forest Service.

Lowell: I would encourage you to sit down with people like Juan and the head of the Forest Service.

Kitty: Have we had conference calls, well with Aaron at least but not Juan.

Lowell: No, I would take it up as high as somebody's willing to listen to you. I would talk about changing the administrative avenues on this not just saying, "Somebody shined me and I don't like the answer." Is there a way that those comments that you referred to for instance in San Juan County, how do we give them more face time, for lack of a better way of looking at it.

Kitty: What if you asked the proposal provide you with the raw comments so that you can read them for yourself? We ask you to read them for yourself. We got them under FOIA and we asked you to look at them without any filtering or censorship from us, this is what they got, we got it under FOIA. Make your own judgment. Read it for yourself, make your own judgment. Did any of you read them?

Lowell: No, I'll speak for myself, Lowell Braxton again. I'm only going to read the administrative record that's brought before me because that's what we're charged to do, if I understand our mission. So if you want that sort of information as part of the record and it's currently not being done, that's what I'm suggesting that you do is you come up with a mechanism that requires those comments to be part of the decision record.

What we were told, granted by the agencies, was those comments were not entirely germane to the issues that were before us. I think that's what was just mentioned a minute ago. So I wouldn't give up if I were you.

Kitty: On the RecRAC process, I essentially have given up because a year from now there won't be any RecRACs. The process is viewed as broken by Congress. Chairman - Representative Bishop from Utah had a series of hearings this summer on federal public land management and one of those was on FLREA. Didn't you testify at one?

Brian Merrill: Yes, it wasn't about that.

Kitty: Right, but it - he had a series and I testified at one in June. And he asked the whole panel of us who were before him at that time, if anybody thought the RecRAC process was working and should be preserved and not one single person answered yes.

So the legislation that's going to replace FLREA, which I don't know if you've been told but it was going to expire in December, that got extended by one year in the bill that reopened the government after the shutdown. The purpose of that one-year extension was to give the oversight committees and the House and the Senate time to draft something instead.

So they're out drafting something instead right now. And I don't know everything that's going to be in it. I don't know anything that's going to be in it. I've given input to it, and so have a lot of other people. But one thing I know that is not going to be in it was going to be RecRACs.

Given that this is how you feel about it, my suggestion to you today is that somebody make a motion, second it, and you all vote yes, that from now through the end of the year everything the BLM or the Forest Service want to do is just preapproved. I mean why waste everybody's time and the taxpayer's money having this gathering here today?

Steve Burr: So Kitty, I remember, I did read some of those comments. I didn't have time I had to trust the summary to a large extent. But they needed - they need to charge fees down there in San Juan. And so wouldn't a better approach...

Kitty: Nobody said they shouldn't. (Fran), all we were questioning was the type of fee, who it was being charged to and the legality of some of the ways it was implemented, as well as many of the assumptions that it was based on in terms of current situation and future projections. Those were called into question over and over again by many, many different commenters.

Steve Burr: Have you had any luck with any kind of carve outs for certain groups, you know? The Navajo kids don't get charged a fee or they get charged less money or something like that. I mean you know, I mean...

Kitty: Yes.

Steve Burr: ...if you tried that approach and...

Kitty: Me?

Steve Burr: Yes, your group.

Kitty: BLM didn't propose anything like that. They got the letter, they didn't propose a single modification to their plan based on that letter.

Steve Burr: I guess what I'm saying is that I think we all have that threshold that you asked about, at some point these become too onerous, we just haven't seen that yet.

You know, now maybe there were too onerous for that group. But for the general population that uses the San Juan, not even close to being too onerous so.

Kitty: So what do you propose that somebody do? Let's take an example that's not in Utah. Over in California - no it was, I'm sorry it was Pacific Northwest, Region 6, Washington and Oregon, they had a fee proposal, this was early days, where a forest told them that they had gotten public comment and that this was how many they had gotten and here was the general tone and tenor of those. And you know, all of them were okay with it except maybe one or two.

After that meeting, and after that proposal had been approved, then we put in a FOIA request and we got those raw comments. The actual comments didn't match what had been told to the RecRAC, not even close.

So if an agency is willing to mislead its own advisory committee, what should a member of the public do about that? What's our recourse? And I'm not pointing fingers at any particular office or any particular proposal, but what is our recourse?

Steve Burr: Steve Burr here...

Kitty: And our recourse in the law was supposed to be you guys.

Steve Burr: To me the onus would be on the agencies. The agencies should not mislead the Resource Advisory Council just because of the way this is setup.

You brought this up Kitty, that the RecRAC has as statutory role and we saw that in every last slide in the proposals today, where they want the RAC's

support that the proposal it has documented general public support. It might be that word general, you know, what does that mean?

Kitty: It's a tough phrase.

Steve Burr: ...support for...

Kitty: It's a tough phrase, and all of the RecRACs, I've attended more RecRAC meetings than any living human being, and they all struggle with that phrase.

Steve Burr: I was also going to say Lowell, I might not necessarily agree with you because on the RAC, I represent dispersed recreation and part of my role as I interpret it is to basically represent a constituency of citizens out there in the state that are recreationists on BLM public land. So with respect to a new business plan and proposed fees, I would be okay, if you know, somebody, some group contacted me directly and letting me know their feelings about a particular proposal.

Kitty: I'm really glad to hear that. I mean in other RecRACs, even the email addresses for the members have been withheld from the public on issues of privacy.

Man: Ours are on the Web site.

Kitty: I don't think your email addresses are, no.

Frank White: I'm involved in off-road vehicle and about three-four years ago, there was a big issue where there was going to be a fee increase out at Little Sahara.

Kitty: I remember.

Frank: I thought that initially I was very opposed to it and I was going to give Glenn Carpenter a bad time about it. There's a lot of off-road vehicle forums and they all knew that I was going to be involved in it and they all had my email address, and I didn't get one comment from anybody.

After Glenn gave his pitch, I came to the conclusion they've got to do this.

Kitty: Yes. And...

Frank: I asked for comment and I had a couple people comment to me after, "How could you let the fee increase?" And I gave them my explanation I said, "If you guys did care why didn't you show up to the meeting?" You know, I gave it right back to them.

Kitty: That's perfectly valid.

Frank: They need to show up or shut up. Glenn sold me and I voted on it. And I think that you know, we can't afford to have these places go down the tube.

Kitty: I submitted a comment on the Little Sahara fee proposal and it was not, "Don't increase the fee," and it was not, "Don't charge fees to OHVS," it was, "Don't charge entrance fees because the law says you can't." And that fee is implemented as an entrance fee.

Kitty: It's an error in implementation.

Man: I'm not a lawyer, but I just thought to myself, you know, a lot of people enjoy this place, I just want a fee - I want to...

Kitty: Okay, so I'm not a lawyer either but the law is pretty easy to...

JR Nelson: I want to echo that comment. This is JR Nelson. The Manti LaSal National Forest is about to open up some beautiful, really accommodating sites that Bill Broadbear talked about today. I don't know how they could do that without implementing a fee. I feel like the benefit to the public brought about by this fee, outweighs the negative impact of the fee. In other words, having it available is really great.

Frankly, if you've got a cabin that will sleep four and also accommodate four trailers, you're going to have enough people who can come up with \$40.

Kitty: Just to clarify, I said in the beginning, "I am not here to speak on those proposals," because those are expanded amenity fees and we have never opposed expanded amenity fees -- never.

JR Nelson: Good

Kitty: Day Use fees are another issue. But expanded amenity fees, I have nothing to say about that. I didn't submit written comments. It's just not our issue, it's outside my scope.

Bill Hopkin: Bill Hopkin again, so sounds to me like we've kind of come to a possible solution.

Kitty: Which is?

Bill Hopkin: Which make sure he gets...

Kitty: We're going to send everything to Steve?

Man: Yes.

Bill Hopkin: I mean if he's willing to, I have people that I feel like I represent that come to me and say...

Kitty: Yes. Well you know...

Bill Hopkin: ...you know, you represent...

Kitty: I said that flippantly, but let me take that seriously for a moment because as I say, "I have attended RecRAC meetings all over the country in person and by teleconference," and the closest counterpart to you guys is probably Arizona where one RecRAC covers the entire state. They have organized themselves and managed themselves very differently from what you do -- very differently.

They have a subcommittee that deals with recreation issues. The chairperson for that subcommittee, a man by the name of Glen Collins, is probably the equivalent of Steve. He and I have a very good working relationship. I make sure that he hears my issues, he listens to them, he evaluates them, he and his subcommittee get together, they get input from the public, they read the raw comments, and then they come to the larger RAC with a recommendation from their own subcommittee. Nine times out of 10, 100 times out of 100, that recommendation's accepted because they know that subcommittee does its homework and I know that subcommittee does its homework. My respect for the Arizona RecRAC is second to none. They're an amazing group of people and they know I think that of them.

It would be nice to have that kind of relationship with any of the other RecRACs anywhere in the country, Forest Service, BLM, any of them. But there's been only one that has taken it on themselves too seriously .

Steve Burr: Let me ask administration and management, I mean is that out of line for - you know, representing dispersed recreation, and you know, (Porter) also does that.

Porter: Yes. I mean I would be happy to see that too. I actually like Steve's comment.

JR: ...I have memory of reading them. Weren't they sent to us?

Kitty: Yes, they were.

Man: I think they were.

Man: The point...

Woman: They were sent to everybody.

Man: I participated by telephone that time so I'm...

Woman: Yes.

Man: But I read them.

Lowell Braxton: This is Lowell. The reason that took the position that I did was I think the only thing that the RAC can really make a decision on is the record that's presented to them in the RAC meeting.

I think that may mean we're going to - and I'm the outgoing chair so this will all disappear in about two hours probably, but my thought is if you make decisions on things that are not presented in the formal meeting, you're probably not creating the type of administrative record to sustain that decision. Something that's sent to one of our members, they may or may not read it so why do you count that?

I think the thing that counts is what's made in the public meeting where there's an opportunity for public comment and there's an opportunity for discussion amongst the RAC. That's why I took the position that I took Steve. Now it...

Steve Burr: Well it...

Lowell: ...may go a different route in another couple of days.

Steve Burr: If something, would come to me that I would make sure - if I felt it was important enough and it was valid based on everything that's set out with respect with BLM being able to collect fees, I would work with staff to make sure that that was prevented, you know, in the business plan.

Lowell: I think that's the way to do it.

Steve Burr: Yes, yes.

Lowell: That's my personal thoughts.

Steve Burr: The Navajo Youth Group, you know I'm just looking through here, varying and waiving permit requirements, fees and one kind of category is the uses and organized group activity or events not commercial, not publically advertised. There's also something in here about educational institutions.

I would see that where the field office down there might be able to waive that fee,

Kitty Benzar: I agree.

Steve Burr: ...it was an educational program.

Kitty: I agree. I think they have that within their scope. But they just have shown no interest in doing anything like that.

Kitty: My time is up and I understand that so, give me the hook whenever you need to.

Juan: What I wanted to mention is that, first of all thank you for bringing this up. We pride ourselves in excellence here in Utah, and certainly I think you brought up some good points that I myself, personally, I think we ought to really explore and think about and how we organize our self to address the concerns that you have.

Because I think that our goal, our overarching goal is exactly what JR's talking about, "How can we best serve the citizens of Utah, and the country as well, how can we provide those amenities that they need given our budget constraints that we have.

Kitty: And do it within the law.

Juan: Sure.

Kitty: Within the federal statutes, within the CFR.

Kitty: I think somebody brought that up. That's very important too.

Juan: So I think that, probably not enough time today to get into details, but it sounds to me you have actually brought a very good point to this RAC today from my perspective, and one that I think with some of us we can explore and at a future time, you know, really work through the recommendation. Because I think we want to go where you would like us to go.

Kitty: That would be great.

Kitty: You're about to have some new members and maybe do some reorganizing. Let me just give you the outline of how Arizona has organized itself.

When they meet they meet for two days in a row. The first day is their subcommittees, and they have I think three subcommittees on different topics. The subcommittees make whatever recommendations they're going to make to the full RAC and they have the full RAC meeting on the second day. That's their standard practice.

They get the proposal information not at their subcommittee meeting, but I think it's 30 days at least before that so the members have time to read it, study it, consult their constituencies and come to the meeting already prepared to address the substance of it.

Joanna Wilson: I always learn something from you.

Kitty: Yes, don't - I watch - you don't enjoy it, I'm sure.

Joanna: No I'm serious, I do because I was in a meeting a year ago with the Idaho Recreation RAC and you mentioned that we don't have enough information on our website that the public should be able to see and read. Now the Forest Service puts informative documents that people may be interested in reading about a fee proposal. I appreciate it and I really learn a lot from you. I promise that our regionals provide that information and public comments to the RecRAC members.

Kitty: Thanks Joanna. Want me out of here? Anybody else? I'm gone.

Joanna: Thank you for your time.

Lowell: Thank you again for your comments. I think the next thing on the agenda is lunch. Sherry how long do you want to run, should we take...

Sherry Foot: Okay, let's take until 1:30 please, take the hour.

Man: Can we vote on the fee?

Man: Would you like - would the RAC like to vote on the fee proposals before lunch? That...

Man: I would.

Man: I defer to the will of the RAC on that.

Man: I would.

Man: Sure, why not.

Man: Yes.

Man: Okay. Who can recall - we've got three things before us. There was a motion on the Calf Creek Recreation Area and Deer Creek Campground. Can somebody pull that motion that was brought up and seconded before us.

Lora Gale: Hi, this is Lora. I can repeat that one again if you'd like, or if Cory is there. Are you there Cory?

Man: Yes, he is.

Cory Roegner: I am.

Lora Gale: Okay.

Steve Burr: I was just going to say so as Recreation RAC coordinator, the way we have this process setup is that I make the motion, they were seconded. So I made a motion first for fee increases on Calf Creek Recreation Area and Deer Creek Campground.

The added fee is for the Moab Campground and this was an amendment to the business plan for Moab for Bitter Creek, Westwater, Hideout, Cowskin, Fish Ford, Swasey's Rapid Campgrounds.

The third motion that was seconded was the third proposal we talked from the Forest Service Manti LaSal National Forest for the Miller Flat Campground, I think that was one group site and three new family sites...

Man: ...paid and then the fees associated with the Orange Olson ...

Man: Cabin.

Man: ...I think he called a cabin.

Man: Dwelling and cabin.

Man: Yes.

Man: Those are the motions that are before us.

Lowell: You're suggesting that we just collectively respond to those three motions.

Man: We can do them separate.

Lowell: No, I have no problem with it. Well let's proceed with the collective motions then. Discussion on those motions? Hearing none, how do we want to vote? All in favor say, "Aye."

Group: Aye.

Lowell: Opposed? Hearing none, the motions pass unanimously.

Lowell: We better add those three to Kitty's list here.

Kitty: I'll take care of it.

Lowell: Okay.

Sherry: Members on the phone, I am going to temporarily disconnect you, until 1:30 and then you'll be brought back on again. Thank you for your participation and we'll chat with you at 1:30.

**The system failed to record the afternoon session of the meeting.

Brad Peterson was not able to attend the meeting. Aaron Curtis gave a brief overview of the Utah Office of the Outdoor Recreation and it's new director, Brad Peterson.

Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Land Use Plan Amendment Discussion continued.
Power point presentation made available upon request. Copies of the Draft plan, Volume 1: Executive Summary, Chapters 1 and 2 were given to each member. Made available upon request.

Presentation was given on the following themes: Vegetation and Fire Management; Range Management; Lands and Realty; Minerals Management and Additional Management Actions.

90-day public comment ends January, 29, 2014. Proposed LUP Amendments/Final EIS Release date, June 2014; Issue BLM and FS Records of Decision, September 2014

Conclusion:

January 23, 2014 meeting – the RAC is to provide collective input on the draft plan and EIS.
RAC to produce draft letter for submission to State Director.

END

Approved by: _____/s/ William Hopkin_____
William Hopkin, Vice Chairman, Utah RAC

Date: _____02/18/2014_____